OCTOBER 2013

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HOMES AND INTERIORS
Our feature this month includes a glorious Oxfordshire cottage

ART SURGERY
Learn how to recreate realistic fir in this month's *Four Shires'* Art Surgery

MOTORCYCLING IN BRACKLEY
Another successful bonanza of bikes!

PICTURES PAST
Our feature this month includes a march through Banbury

THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVER....Peter Jones chats to a *Four Shires'* Star

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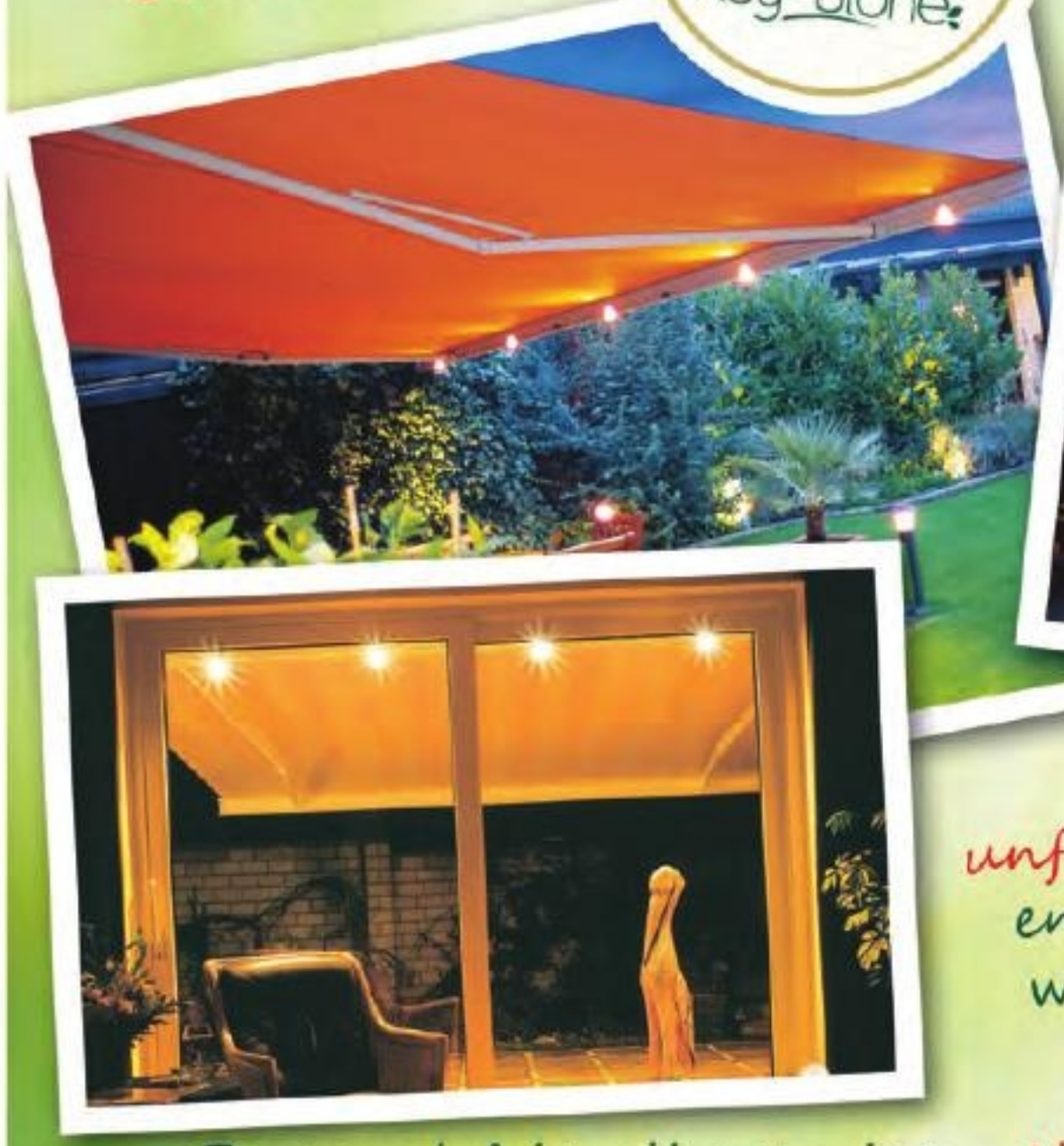

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FOUR SHIRES

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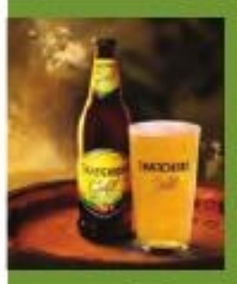
Mines a...Pint of Hooky



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FROM THE EDITOR

As I walked around Peoples' Park in Banbury last month, I was hit on the head with an acorn! As has been pointed out, this scene should have been included at the start of a 'Walt Disney' style film, perhaps showing a squirrel with a catapault hiding behind a tree.

The grey squirrels in Peoples' Park do seem to have a bit of a hard time.

Not only have I seen them chased by dogs (one of which – a terrier - completely forgot himself and raced a good six feet up the tree before realising where he was and dropping off) but I have also seen them being pecked by crows. Arming themselves with acorns and catapaults seems entirely justified!

Being hit on the head with the acorn prompted thoughts other than martial squirrels however. It seems this year has been fantastically bountiful in the garden and on the allotment. For the first time ever I have grown four or five rows of sweetcorn and nearly all have produced good, firm cobs. It isn't just me though, my good mate Susie at Batsford Arboretum has some super specimens, as have my fellow allotment holders in Banbury.

Horticultural firsts don't end with the sweetcorn however. For years now, I have nurtured a couple of vines on my patch and lo and behold, this year I have dozens of bunches of large, sweet, black grapes. There aren't really enough to start treading however, so don't hold your breath waiting for a black Sancerre Sinclair Avenue just yet!

On a sadder note, allotment colleague Pete passed away last month – he will be sadly missed. Whilst being on the receiving end of a few of his 'telling offs' more than once, he was a very generous man. No one will grow chrysanths quite like him again.

JEREMY WILTON

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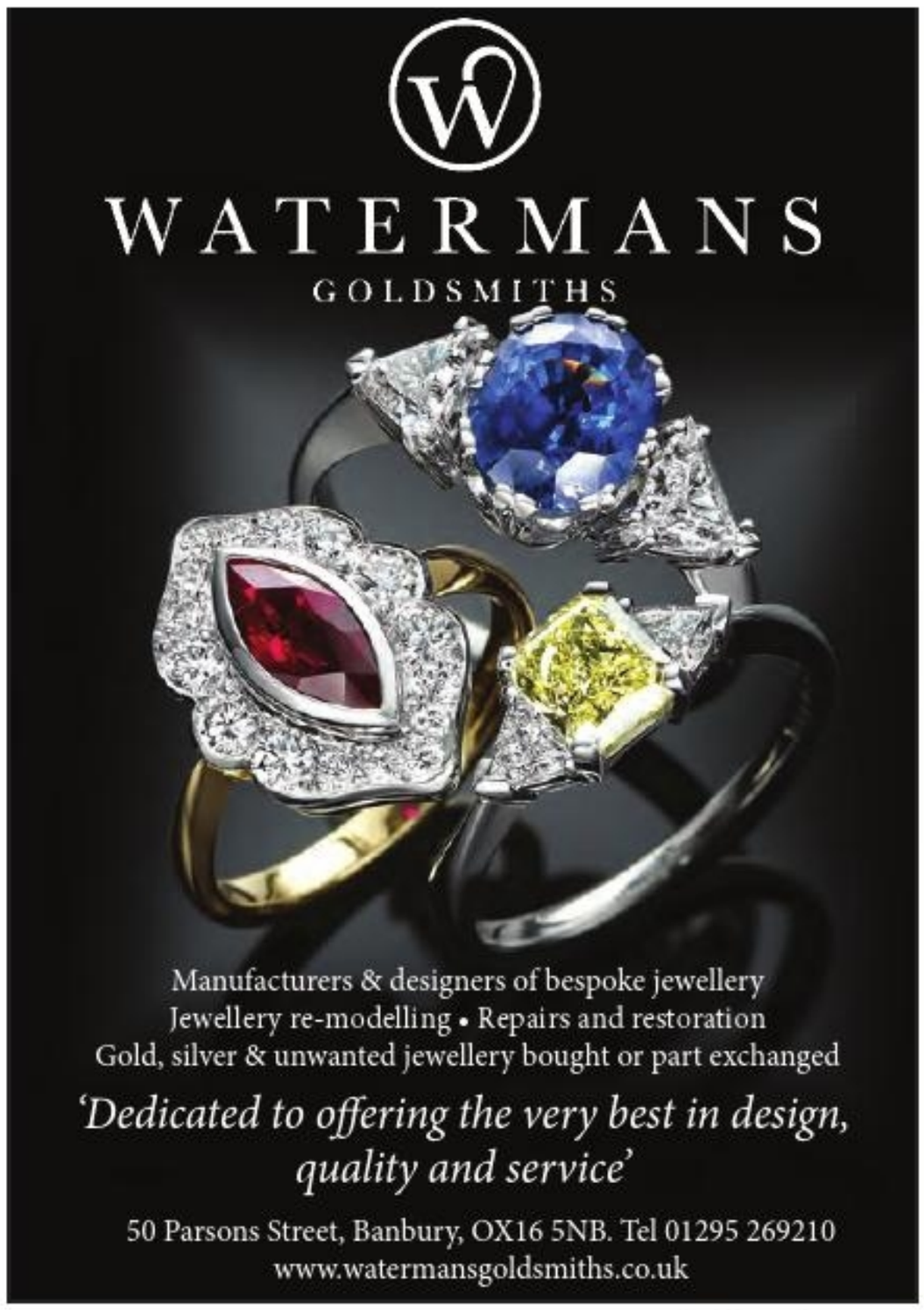
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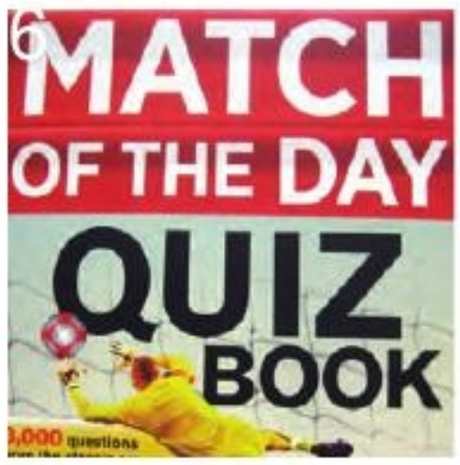
Four Shires

WHAT'S INSIDE FOUR SHIRES THIS MONTH

Our extended Homes and Interiors feature this month offers you the latest in autumn and winter trends. We also take a look at a local sculptor's Oxfordshire cottage.



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Take a look at what has been happening in the *Four Shires* over the past month. Everything from local success stories to reviews of the best local events.

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Take a look and find out.

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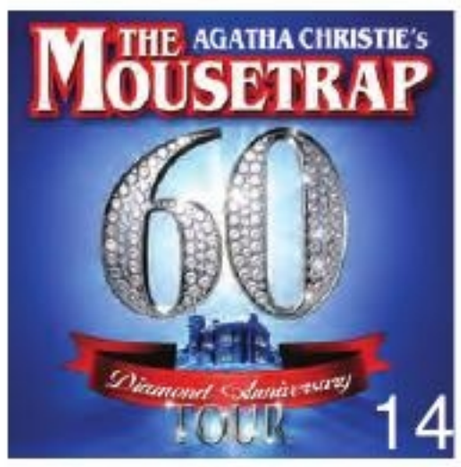

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Peter Jones has dinner with rock drummer, John Lingwood.

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A celebration of the recent Upper Boddington vintage festival.

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A celebration of local *Four Shires* eateries including The Horse and Groom at Milcombe and The Wykham Arms in Sibford.

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Everything you need from handymen to garden services.

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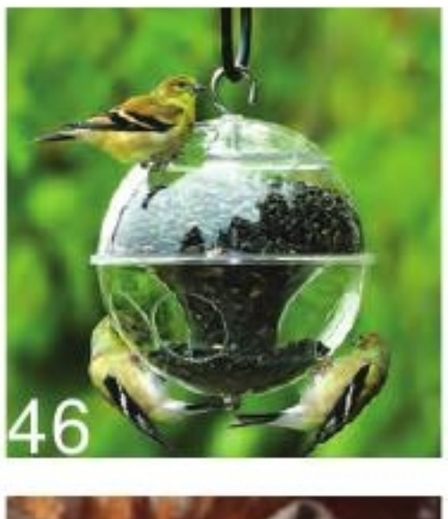
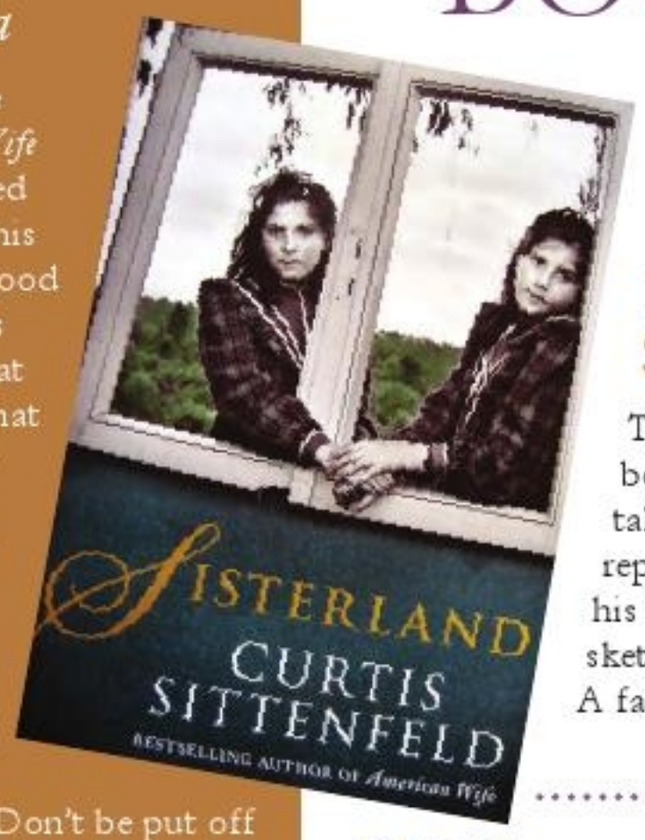


The eye of the tiger

pictures from the past

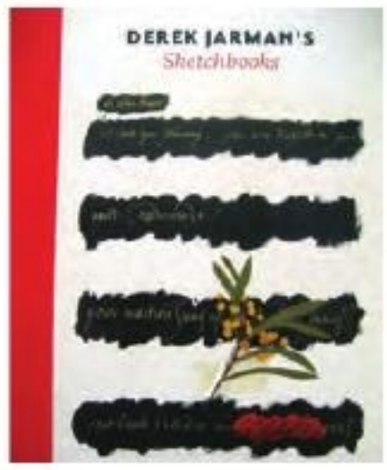
BOOKS *for your* BOOKSHELVES

SISTERLAND
Naoki Higashida



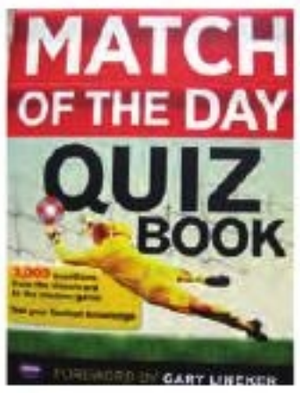
I love this author, she wrote *The American Wife* and *Prep*, which I loved and I have just read this one which is just as good as her others. I always find it hard to say what it is about her work that so appeals to me, this book is a straightforward story about the unpredictability of life, somewhat in the vein of Richard Ford and A.M. Homes. I thought it was great. Don't be put off by the dreadful cover, it bears hardly any relation to the story within.
£18.99

DEREK JARMAN'S SKETCHBOOKS



This is a beautifully compiled and produced book of this great film director and multi talented man. Pages of his notebooks are reproduced and show the germination of his ideas for his film work or his garden, with sketches and photos and ideas jotted down. A fascinating insight. £28.

THE MATCH OF THE DAY QUIZ BOOK
BBC Books

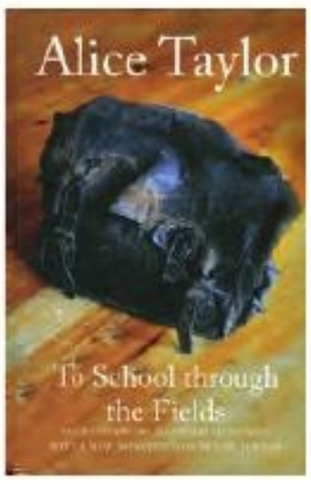


Here's a stocking filler thought, *The Match of the Day Quiz Book*, 3000 questions on football, hard to imagine a happy family Christmas without such a book!
£9.99

SIMPLE PRINTMAKING
Elizabeteh Harbour

Simple Printmaking by Elizabeth Harbour is a lovely book explaining how various easy printing techniques can be employed at home for furnishings, clothing and stationery items. It provides templates for some of the designs and the instructions are clear and eminently achievable. £16.99

TO SCHOOL THROUGH THE FIELDS
Alice Taylor



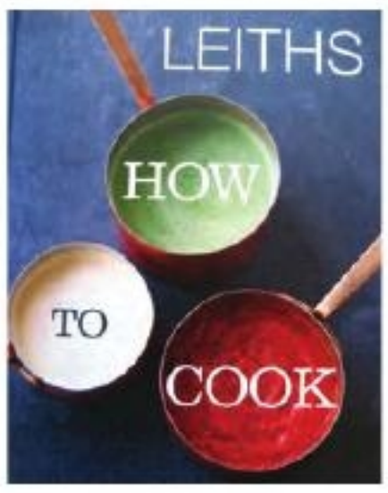
In a time of austerity when many of us are reaching back to basics and hankering after a safer and more caring society, *To School Through the Fields* is a beautiful reminder of a simpler age when children could roam free and friendship and neighbourliness was commonplace.

Sharing tales of her childhood in rural 1940's nd 50's Ireland, Taylor paints a picture of a lost world, one which her family worked the farm with horses and reared and grew all their food; a world in which the children walked alone to school across the fields - a challenging but often delightful journey, with many stops along the way for sustenance and entertainment.

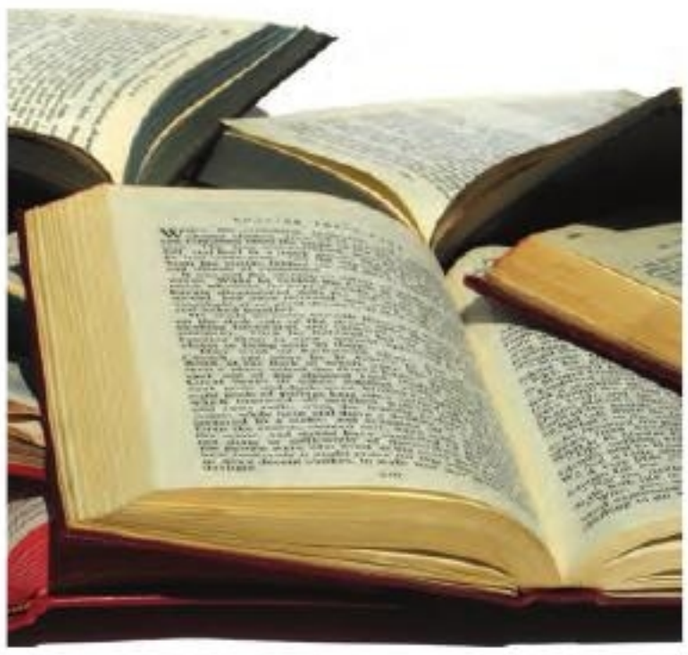
The author captures the colours, the rhythms, the rich bittersweet emotions of a time gone by and the colourful characters and joyaous moments made the first edition of the book in 1988, an Irish Phenomenon.

This hardback book is priced at £12.99
ISBN: 978-1-84717-587-8

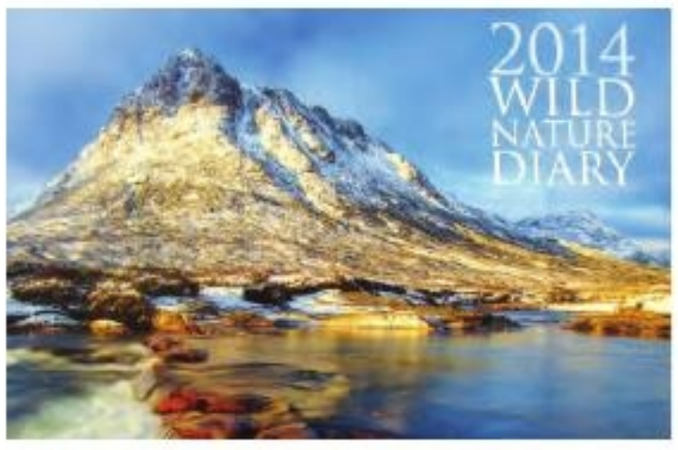
HOW TO COOK
Leith's School



Leith's How to Cook is a magnificent great bible of all you might need to know about cooking for the family, from beginner's recipes to more ambitious fare. £30

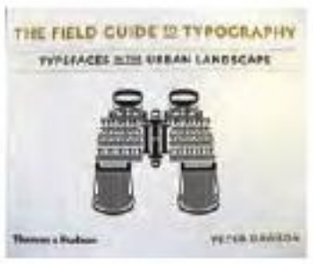


WILD NATURE DIARY
John Muir Trust



The 2014 Wild Nature Diary is now in stock. Published by the John Muir Trust for wild lands and wild places. As in the past, a week at a view, each with a glorious photo of some of Britain's great wild places. £13.50

THE FIELD GUIDE TO TYPOGRAPHY
Peter Dawson



Lastly The Field Guide to Typography is a look type faces in the world around us in our day to day lives. This is a fascinating and attractive visual reference for students and experienced designers alike. £16.95.

Christine Bridger of the Old Hall Bookshop in Brackley offers up some lovely books you can curl up with as the weather gets colder

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CROPREDY LAWN OPEN DAY

Warm autumnal sunshine welcomed owners, prospective owners, racing enthusiasts and friends to local racehorse trainer Paul Webber's annual 'owners day' viewing

Guests enjoyed a parade of approximately 60 horses including stable favourites 'Time For Rupert', 'Alasi' and 'Cantlow' in addition to many potential future stars. Visitors were also able to tour the stables and watch horses swimming in the equine facility before being treated to an excellent lunch, provided by The Inn at Farnborough.

Images by Harry Rhodes at Tudor Photography

Pictures show: 1: Suzanne Heath and Paul Christie 2: 'Models on the Catwalk!' 3: John Wilson, Jerry Walsh and Ros Wilson 4: Millie Scott modelling Sophie Webber's browbands! 5: Mike, Monica Cattermole and family. 6: Chris and Haan Van Reen. 7: Parading the horses 8: The magnificent Cropredy Lawn team 9: More Models! 10: Paul Webber with Antony Barrow

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FOUR SHIRES AROUND THE SHIRES

TREE AND PLANT AUCTION

Held in aid of Shipston Home Nursing, Wyatts nursery is holding a tree and plant auction. The auction will take place on Saturday October 19 at Wyatts Garden Centre, Hill Bar Farm, Great Rollright.

The auction will start at 11.30am and there will be a BBQ to follow. For more details call Rebecca 01608 674 929

90th ANNIVERSARY TEA HELD

The Inner Wheel Club of Banbury, in conjunction with Country Casuals, held a 90th Anniversary afternoon tea and fashion show at The Whately Hall Hotel in Banbury last month to celebrate 90 years of the Association of Inner Wheel Clubs and 40 years of Country Casuals trading in Banbury.

The event was a complete sell-out.

During the tea, 20's style jazz was played by Sue Greenway and Dickie White.

Maureen Carney, President of the Banbury Club is pictured here during the event.

FOOD FAIR A SUCCESS

Banbury's annual Food Fair saw the Market Place packed with 80 stalls selling a wide range of food and drink – with tastes and flavours from around the world.

Thousands of people packed into the town centre to sample and buy the goods on offer and to watch cooking demonstrations and cookery competitions.

Visitors were also able to relax in a Pimms area or take high tea as the sun shone on the event.

Celebrity masterchef Paul Da Costa-Greaves was a popular attraction in the demo marquee with his innovative and nourishing meals. He was supported by Banbury cooking school Pudding Pie who revealed some useful techniques and interesting recipes.

NEW EXHIBITION AT BANBURY MUSEUM

Engravings depicting enchanting scenes of rural life offer a unique insight into the work of three prominent artists from the early 20th Century. Until 23 November, Banbury Museum will host *A Fine Line*, an exhibition showcasing the work of Sydney Carline, Stanley Anderson and Robin Tanner. The display celebrates many rural and craft scenes from across Oxfordshire and celebrates the work of three artists who played a part in the engraving revival of the early 20th Century. The museum is open from 10am - 5pm. For more information call 01295 753752.

BANBURY LITERARY LIVE

Avid readers from all over The *Four Shires* attended a new literary festival in Banbury last month.

Banbury Literary Live took place at North Oxfordshire Academy.

Not only did the festival include a wide range of literary activities such as readings, book signings, storytelling and talks from the authors themselves, but also showcased natural young talent from the school including bands, solo artists, dancers and theatrical performances.

The event also attracted well-known authors Andy Cope and Nick Arnold.

Andy, author of the *'Spy Dog'* series brought along his canine friend 'Star' – the character featured in his books.

Nick Arnold gave a wild show from the best of the *'Horrible Saience'* series performing experiments during his talk.

The annual festival will return next year.

OCTOBER EVENT IN SUPPORT OF KATHARINE HOUSE HOSPICE

There are a number of events going on in October in support of Katharine House Hospice. One of the events is *From Broadway to Banbury*. Banbury Operatic Society are presenting a celebration of the best award-winning musicals of Broadway and the West End musicals on Friday 18 and Saturday 19 October (7.30pm both evenings plus 2.30pm Saturday matinee) at Marlborough Road Methodist Church Banbury. Drawing on shows from both the present day and some old favourites material will include *Chicago, Sweeney Todd and Phantom of the Opera* to name but a few. Tickets are £10 and available from Ankers and Partners, Banbury, tel 01295 271414. One third of the profits go to Katharine House.

PRE-RAPHAELITE WORKS TO BE SHOWCASED IN NORTHAMPTON

A major new exhibition at Northampton Museum and Art Gallery will bring together a stunning collection of Pre-Raphaelite works some of which have never been seen in public before. The exhibition runs until Sunday 3 November and admission is free: Northampton Museum is open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 5pm and 2pm to 5pm on Sundays.

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HOOK NORTON BREWERY PICKS UP 10 AWARDS

Four Shires' based brewery Hook Norton has reinforced its commitment to producing the best quality beer, securing a respectable 10 awards in the recent International Beer Challenge 2013.

Hook Norton picked up these awards amongst a field of international brewers from 33 countries, including heavyweights such as Samuel Adams in the USA and Italy's Peroni.

In the Beer Tasting category, both strong, dark brown beer *Twelve Days* and pale ale *Haymaker* were bestowed with silver awards, while Hook Norton favourites *Old Hooky* and *Hooky Gold* were acknowledged for their quality with bronze awards.

Elsewhere in the design and packaging category, Hook Norton took six honours including a silver award for *Double Stout*. The brewer's *Flagship, Haymaker, Hooky Bitter, Hooky Gold* and *Old Hooky* beers were presented with bronze awards.

ART IN WOODSTOCK

Woodstock will be transformed into a celebration of visual arts from Saturday 26th October – Sunday 3rd November, showcasing work by visiting professional artists and local talent.

Visitors to the annual festival are in for a treat with an extremely wide variety of art on display, some fascinating talks and activities for all the family.

The art work will be on show throughout the town: in shops, the Museum and the Town Hall, even the churches, hotels and restaurants will become showcases.

For further information go online at: www.artinwoodstock.com

HATTON WORLD PUMPKIN EVENT

Hatton World near Warwick will be hosting a pumpkin event from the 26 October - 3 November. Every child will receive a free pumpkin with daily carving competitions in their brilliant, but slightly spooky themed marquee! Plus there will be Hatton's Pumpkin Hunt with a prize badge and Hatton's Halloween Pumpkin House. For further information please phone 01926 843 411.

THE ENCLOSURE OF BAMPTON

Until 27 October, free admission, wheelchair access, opening hours, Monday-Saturday, 11.00am - 1.00pm and 2.30pm - 4.30pm, Sundays 2.30pm - 4.30pm. The Vesey Room, Bampton Public Library, Church View, Bampton.

This fascinating exhibition traces the changes that have taken place in Bampton since the agricultural revolution and the effects on the local people. By referencing the original book of the Bampton Inclosure Award of 1821, Miriam James has been able to present us with details of those people affected by enclosure together with detailed maps giving the proposed shapes and sizes of the new enclosed fields.

There is also a small but entertaining exhibit of photographs of the filming of Downton Abbey which took place in Bampton.

NEW LOOK MILL ARTS CENTRE

Speaking at the relaunch of The Mill, Manager Georgia Geary commented

'The Mill is back open and looking better than ever; keeping busy as usual, the new look café provides its usual tasty delights and outside seating. It then transitions into a stylish evening bar open to the public, not just for theatre goers.

The biggest transformation is the new theatre lighting system. Modern LED lighting provides smooth and enhanced performances whilst keeping cool, allowing the theatre to be cooler in the summer.

The Millers Bar is becoming a well-used space, now much brighter with a focus on starting regular nights such as 'Fake Fridays'.

The Mill is developing, not just the building but also the personnel, through apprenticeships, training and volunteer opportunities.'

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN BICESTER

An archaeological evaluation at a site in bicester has uncovered a series of walls and layers relating to the former priory buildings as well as related graves, evidence of outbuildings including walls and a possible oven. A small number of burials have also been recorded.

The land includes the vacant st edburg's house care homes and former social services offices. The area is situated on the site of the former augustinian priory, established by gilbert de bassett in 1182 – 1185 and dissolved in 1536.

PINS AND NEEDLES - SEWING GROUP IN THE CAFE AT COGGES

Have you got the needle? Are you into your knitting, sewing or crochet? Would you like to meet up with like-minded people? Then pop along to *Pins and Needles*, a group that meets at *The Cafe* At Cogges Manor Farm.

It's open on Tuesday mornings from 10am - 12noon. Bring your needles for a chat and a swap shop of ideas. Everybody is welcome - whatever your level. For further information email or just turn up!

Every Tuesday until 29 October. Cogges Manor Farm, Church Lane, OX28 3LA, Witney.

01993 772602, mysewcalleddesigns@gmail.com, Free, 16+.

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Maggie Chaplin

looks at the good, the bad and the ugly of the fungus world

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

There are thousands of different fungi that man has identified and no doubt many more that he hasn't. In many ways fungi are just as important to us as the pollinating insects we worry about, because without fungi we'd probably be buried under a mountain of refuse and non-rotting vegetation. A dustmen's strike is insignificant compared with what an absence of fungi would mean.

Fungi are some of nature's recyclers and they generally go about their useful work unheeded. Most of the time we are oblivious of the fungal root systems (or mycelia) that cover acres under our feet, and of the millions of spores in the air around us, but what we do notice, however, are the fruit bodies of the larger species that appear to pop up overnight out of nowhere when the conditions are right. For many of them the prime time is in the autumn, so if you're out and about in the woods and fields in Four Shires this month keep a look out for fungi. You may discover something unusual.

Fungi show themselves in such an amazing range of almost surreal shapes, sizes and colours that on appearance alone they are captivating. Add to that the fact that some of them are absolutely delicious to eat, whereas to consume the tiniest bit of others can prove fatal, and their fascination is almost irresistible.

Many fungi are good simply to look at. Golden spindles, scarlet elf cups or the colourful waxcaps for example beguile because of their stunning appearance. Others appeal because they are delicious to eat.

A feature that's very important when considering foraging for wild mushrooms for the table is ease of recognition. A fungus that is itself tasty and that doesn't have a poisonous look-alike is worth seeking out.

Somewhere near the top of the list of such prized fungi must be the penny bun, a member of the boletus family. This is a mushroom that has pores on the underside of the cap rather than the gills that field or horse mushrooms have. The cap is light brown on top and creamy white underneath and can grow as big as a tea plate, whilst the stem, which is usually wider at the base, is solid, and often as thick as a cucumber

Pictures show: Left page: Orange waxcaps and right page, top: Golden spindles and below: Colourful scarlet elf cups and A mature parasol mushroom

Four Shires October 2013.indd 10 05/09/2013 11:49:41

in diameter. A network of fine white lines on the stem surface helps to distinguish it from its less appetising relatives. In a warm, damp autumn penny buns may appear in abundance in pine, oak and chestnut woods.

Another very popular edible fungus is the parasol mushroom. Its taste and texture are likened to chicken by some mushroom hunters and from the forager's point of view the parasol has the advantage of being so big that you don't need many to make a good breakfast. The convex cap can be as much as handspan across and has a very distinctive speckled surface. The stem is unusual too. It's slender with a snakeskin-like pattern and a thick moveable woolly collar. This is a rarer find, but may be locally common in pastures, verges and open woodland and the sight of dozens of them together at various stages of development is a delight to the eye.

Also good to eat and much commoner are the puffballs, all species of which are edible when young and the flesh is white. These fungi have neither pores nor gills and eject their spores in the thousands through an opening at the top when the puffball matures. Common puffballs, which grow amongst leaf litter, mainly in open woodlands, resemble spiny golf balls perched on equally spiny tees, and change from white to brown as they age.

A more risky prospect for a potential meal is the sheathed woodtuft. This is a much sought-after edible fungus because of its reportedly delicious nutty flavour and the fact that when it appears it does so in abundance. It grows on rotting wood but so too does one of the bad guys, the funeral bell, which is almost identical in appearance. Both come in shades of tan and brown, are about the same size and have the same fruiting season. They often even share the same dead log and only very minor differences distinguish them. The funeral bell, true to its name, can kill. Would you risk it?

Fortunately fatal and near-fatal poisonings are rare, but severe gastrointestinal illness from eating the wrong sort of fungus is all too common. The worst culprit is the innocuous – looking yellow stainer which is easily confused with the horse mushroom. Both grow in parks and on grassland, both have white caps that are similar in size, and both have pinkish grey gills. In fact if you collect your mushrooms with a knife you may never know the difference till it's too late. How can you

tell if you've found some of nature's bounty or are setting yourself up for an attack of the gripes? The clue's in the name. If you pull the yellow stainer out of the soil at its base and cut the stalk at the bottom, the cut flesh will turn a bright chrome yellow. This colour change doesn't occur with the edible look-alikes.

Then there are the ugly fungi. One of the most unpleasant is the stinkhorn. It has a thick porous white stalk topped by a black, slimy, wrinkled cap. It gets its name because it has a powerful pervasive smell – of rotting flesh! The stink, which can hit your nostrils from a good hundred metres away, emanates from the slime, which is attractive to flies. In its juvenile stage, when it is just emerging from the woodland soil and looks like a white egg, it is apparently edible, but there is no temptation to eat the mature version. The Latin name – Phallus impudicus alludes to its shape.

Something called "dog's vomit fungus" has to be ugly, and it is. It can be white or yellow and will appear in irregular, almost frothy patches amongst meadow grass. Further description is unnecessary as the name says it all. Generally it persists for no more than a day, and in fact it is now known ▶

Four Shires October 2013.indd 11 04/09/2013 09:27:34

Fungi

that dog's vomit fungus is a slime mould and not a fungus at all, but the name has stuck.

Some ugly fungi are edible. Morels with their brown honeycomb caps and tall white stalks are not dissimilar in appearance to stinkhorns (but they don't have the vile smell), and they are much prized for the table. The cauliflower fungus which grows on pine stumps, wouldn't win any prizes in a beauty contest either, but is highly regarded as an edible species.

Fungal fruit bodies appear in an amazing array of shapes and colours, and range from stunningly beautiful to downright repulsive. They can be absolutely delectable to eat or they can kill, but in the fungal kingdom it is at least possible to be good as well as ugly!

If you want to learn more about fungi then why not visit Batsford Arboretum for their *Fungi Foray* on Sunday October 13, 10.30am and 1.30pm.

Celebrate UK Fungus Day and get foraging with Dave Champion who'll take you on an adventure around the arboretum, seeking out fabulous fungi. As Chairman of the Cotswold Fungus Group, Dave knows what to look out for and how to identify edible and poisonous fungi. Sturdy footwear and waterproofs are a must. Bring a collecting basket and a notebook and pencil to jot down whatever you find! To give everyone the best possible experience we limit each foray to 20 people - early booking is essential by calling 01386 701441. Tickets cost £4 per person + arboretum entrance fee.

Pictures show: from the top down, left to right: Dog vomit fungus, edible morel mushroom, a penny bun, the slimy, smelly cap of the stinkhorn, common puffball, cauliflower fungus and the harmless looking yellow stainer

Four Shires October 2013.indd 12 24/09/2013 08:26:22

PIANO SMASHING ANSWERS

Dear Four Shires,

I have just looked through *Four Shires* September edition and can give you some information about the piano smashing pictures.

They were taken in Adderbury. The Friends of the Cheshire Home were raising funds as the site had been chosen to provide a home for people with incurable complaints such as multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis and muscular dystrophy. Greenhill House had not yet been converted in 1967. As Chairman of the present group of Friends, I looked up information about the home when we were raising funds for the move to Banbury.

I quote from an article, Banbury Advertiser, 4 October 1967. "Cliff Richard, the pop star, would have opened the fete at Greenhill House, Adderbury on Saturday afternoon, but was unable to attend because of a prior engagement. He had been asked by Mr Neil Marten, Banbury's MP, and although he could not attend, he sent his best wishes".

With regard to the piano smashing, the article says: "After the mentally strenuous activity of opening the fete, he then indulged in the physically strenuous task of trying to smash a piano, helping the Chipping Norton Round Table team. The contest was between the Banbury, Chipping Norton and Oxford team, who set out to beat the 3 minutes 11 seconds record previously set up in contests between the three".

The Banbury team of Mike Budd, Paul Lester, Alf Reynolds and Roy Stroomer won the contest but added a minute to the record.

As I am currently President of the Inner Wheel Club of Banbury, I was amused to read further: "The Inner Wheel ran perhaps the most successful tea tent at any fete in the area, with no waiting and a self service technique that should be copied".

Hope this helps, regards
Maureen Carney
Banbury

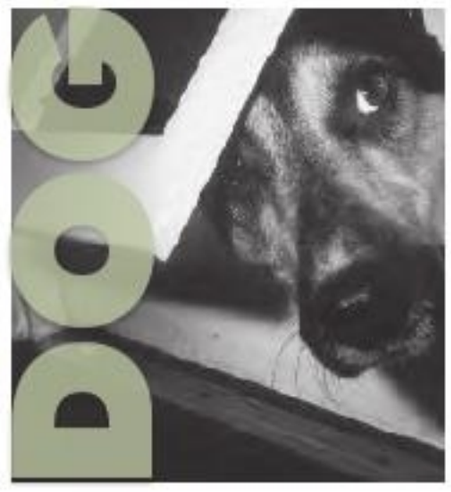
Dear Sirs

Your photograph of piano smashing competitions brought back memories of the early 1950s. I was an apprentice piano tuner at a company in Paignton, Devon. They restored old keyboard instruments and supplied such musical giants as Benjamin Britten.

Piano smashing competitions were held on 'The Green' to raise money for local charities. Television had arrived, and old, poor quality pianos were unsaleable.

The competitions were an unusual attraction for holidaymakers!

Your truly
Tony Bowden
Banbury
Oxon.



Dog was out on his travels last month and found this post box out in the wilds. It was positioned on a cross roads in the south of our area and the nearest habitation seemed to be at least three miles in either direction. Do any of our readers now where this post box is? Is it the loneliest post box in our area? **A bottle of fizz to any of our readers who can shed light on the lonely utility!**

A friend of Dog was pleased to hear that *The Wombles* will be making a welcome return to our television screens.

Having a small child, she feels that this will be a great addition to the 'classic' cartoons that she hopes her son will grow up with.

Dramatico Animation Ltd will be creating a series of 52, 11 minute episodes for Channel 5's *Milkshake* slot set. Mike Batt confirms that the new TV series will be CGI saying "it will look more like stop motion but with great fur. We believe that there are audiences of new children and international audiences who missed *The Wombles* the first time around and will be thrilled to see the brilliant high quality animation productions we shall be mounting." The animation test will be available to view at MIPJunior in Cannes in October 2013.

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OUT & ABOUT

COUNTRY MARKET

St Leonard's Church Eynsham, every Thursday until December 19, 9-10.30am.

Locally produced, home made cakes, preserves, savouries, seasonal fruit and vegetables, eggs and honey, and hand made crafts. Tea, coffee and cake is available. Free tastings every month and celebration cakes to order.

Gift hampers of country market produce are available. There are more than 50 producers and growers but more are always welcome.

01865 880928, suebm@mypostoffice.co.uk

HALF-MARATHON

October 13, Kassam Stadium, Oxford, from 9.30am. Join the Helen & Douglas House team for this run through the historic heart of Oxford. The unique route will give runners a glimpse of the Mini Plant as well as a stunning route through Christchurch Meadows.

For further information and sign up forms please call or email.

ksankey@helenanddouglas.org.uk

PHOTOGRAPHY DAY, WADDESDON MANOR

With Stuart Bebb. October 11, 9.30am - 4.30pm. Come and learn how to get the best out of your camera, take outdoor shots using the beautiful gardens at Waddesdon as a backdrop. You will be in the company of professional local photographer Stuart Bebb. Booking essential, limited to 10-12 participants.

01296 653226

Waddesdon.Manor@nationaltrust.org.uk

£85. per person, minimum age 16.

EAST OXFORD FROM ABOVE

The Gallery, Museum of Oxford, Until November 10. Featuring aerial photographs of East Oxford in the 1920s and '30s and work created by local community groups inspired by the images. In partnership with English Heritage. Gallery open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 11am-3pm. Free

museum@oxford.gov.uk

OXFORD PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY: ANNUAL EXHIBITION 2013

North Wall Arts Centre, October 15 - November 8, 10am - 4pm

Oxford Photographic Society, founded in 1889, is one of the oldest photographic groups in the country.

Oxford Photographic Society fosters and appreciates all forms of photography and their annual exhibition is designed to showcase the breadth and talent of its members. They encourage participation no matter what level of experience a member may have.

01865 319450, contact@thenorthwall.com

FRANCIS BACON HENRY MOORE: FLESH AND BONE

Ashmolean Mueseum, Until Jan 19. *Francis Bacon Henry Moore: Flesh and Bone* will show 20

paintings by Bacon alongside 20 sculptures and 20 drawings by Moore, the exhibition will explore themes such as the treatment of the human figure and the artists' responses to the violence of the 20th century. Viewing Tue-Sun 10-5pm. £8, concession £6.

FLOWER FESTIVAL

St Mary Magdalene Church, Woodstock, Oct 4 - 6. An autumn flower festival with the theme *'Saints told in Flowers'*. There will be arrangements representing more than 20 local organisations, business and societies. Proceeds to St Mary Magdalene Church and the ROSY charity for very sick children. 10-4pm. Free.

01993 811747, patwoodward@btinternet.com, Free.

ANIMAL ANTICS

Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, October 24.

Can you spot a cat? A camel? A crocodile? Read an animal story and make paw print patterns. Especially for under 5's. Two sessions: 10.30-12.30pm, 2-4pm.

Four Shires October 2013.indd 14 23/09/2013 11:48:05

CRAFT AND GIFT FAIR

A chance to see and buy unique gifts for Christmas. Refreshments available

20 October, 11.00am - 4pm, Drayton Leisure and Golf Club, Warwick Road, OX17 1HJ Banbury

01295711752, cheryl.moss@btinternet.com, Adults £1.00.

HAND-PRINTING WORKSHOP

Story Museum, Oxford, October 19, 2pm - 4pm.

Put your pens away and discover the art of printing by hand on our antique printing presses, taught by the Bodleian's Dr Paul Nash. You'll learn new skill, have fun, and make your own keepsake to take home! Suitable for ages 8+

www.storymuseum.org.uk/print, 01865 790050, handprinting@storymuseum.org.uk

BOTANICAL STUDY - A PLETHORA OF PLANTS

Oxford Botanic Gardens, October 19, 2pm - 3pm.

Explore the collections of the Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum with Stephen Harris (curator of the herbaria). A voyage of botanical discovery looking in detail at plants of seasonal interest.

£10 per session, 01865 826690, tickets@obg.ox.ac.uk

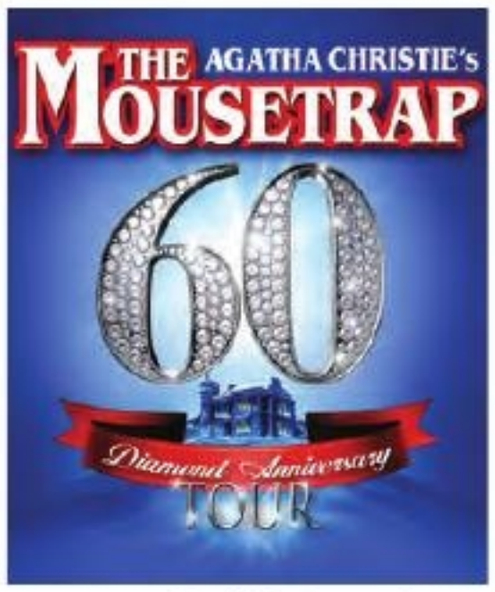
THE MOUSETRAP

New Theatre, Oxford, October 8 - 12.
Agatha Christie's masterpiece on tour for the first time, celebrating 60 years on the stage. Starring Karl Howman (*Brush Strokes*), Graham Seed (*The Archers*), Bruno Langley (*Coronation Street*), Elizabeth Powell, Steven France, Jemma Walker and Clare Wilkie (*all EastEnders*), plus Bob Saul.

Tickets £10-£35. 7.30pm, mats Wed and Sat 2.30pm

ACOUSTIC ROOM

Open Mic 'unplugged'. Doors 7.30pm, music starts 8pm. Bar



sponsored by Wychwood Brewery, raffle by Rapture Entertainment. All music, all ages.

17 October 2013. Winchester Room, St Mary's Church, Church Green, OX28 4AW Witney , 01993 705026, jean_greenway@hotmail.com

AUTUMN AT BATSFORD ARBORETUM

Autumn is a spectacular time of year to visit Batsford Arboretum in the heart of the north Cotswolds. The trees are ablaze with colour. Pick up a copy of the Batsford Golden Mile and self-guide yourself around the 56 acre arboretum. Enjoy gorgeous home-baked food in the Garden Terrace Café andvisit the plant centre, garden and gift shops.

Find out more by visiting www.batsarb.co.uk

INTERMEDIATE GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHY.

Friday October 25, 10.30am to 3pm.

Enjoy access to Batsford Arboretum. Award-winning photographer James Kerr has more than 20 years' experience photographing some of the country's most famous and beautiful gardens and will be on hand to offer advice and tips of the trade to capture colours of autumn.

Please bring your digital camera, lenses and tripod if you have one. Places limited so booking early is advised. Price: Tickets cost £85 per person which includes tea/filter coffee and cake on arrival and entrance to the Arboretum.

www.batsarb.co.uk

Our workshops are fun - no experience necessary!

You will be taught throwing and hand-building techniques by two of our highly-skilled potters.

We are holding a workshop on:
Saturday 30th November - 9am to 1.30pm
£75 per workshop (gift vouchers available)
Cost includes tuition, materials, firing and refreshments.
Please contact us for more details,
to book your place, or for 2014 workshop dates.

Whichford Pottery, Whichford, Nr. Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire, CV36 5PG. Tel: 01608 684416
www.whichfordpottery.com

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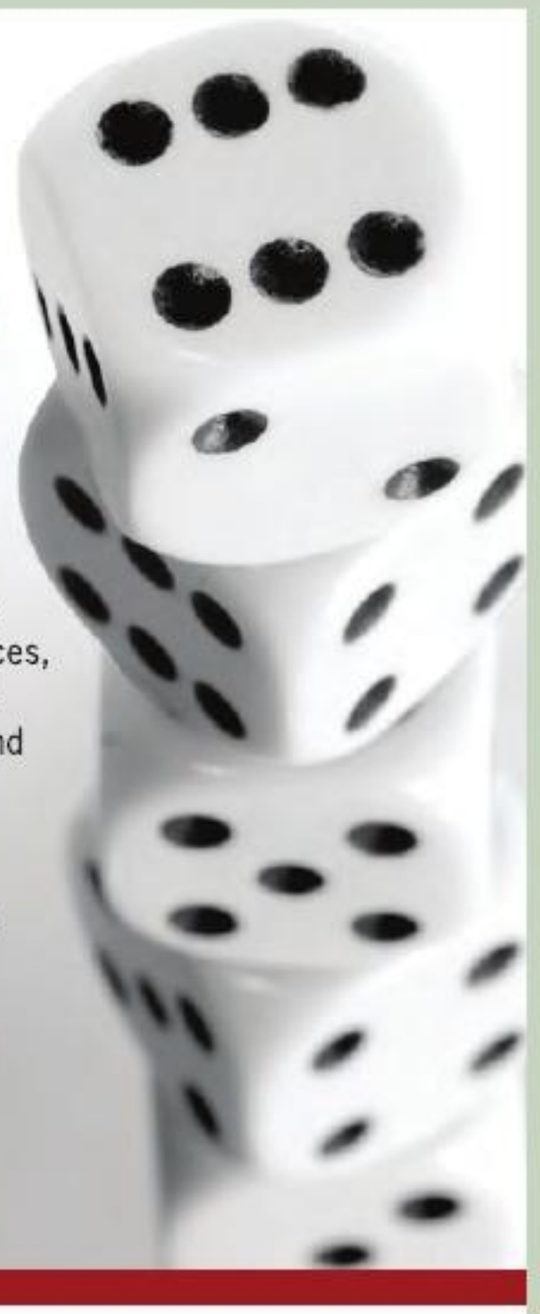

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OUT & ABOUT

BANBURY FOLK FESTIVAL

The festival started in 2000 as a one day event but has grown into a full weekend, attracting major artists and folk enthusiasts from all over the country whilst still maintaining its friendly, intimate atmosphere.

The Mill Arts Centre, by the Oxford canal, is the main venue for the festival. It is only a short walk to the rest of the town and other festival venues.

Main artists at this year's restival include: Jamie Smith's *MABON*, Mike Silver & Johnny Coppin , Bernard Wrigley, Meet on the Ledge, Colvin Quarmby , Kimber's Men, George Papavgeris and The Young' Uns.

This year's festival will be held on October 11 - 13 at various venues. A full list of artists and venues can be found at www.banburyfolkfestival.co.uk

COOPER BLACK

The Theatre, Chipping Norton, October 5, 7.45pm.

A Theatre fundraiser featuring an eclectic mix of folk, country blues and pop. £15.

01608 642350

THE THREE BILLY PIGS,

The Mill Arts Centre, Banbury, Saturday October 19, 11.30am & 2.30pm

Once upon a time there were three little pigs and now it is time for them to leave home. They set off to build their dream houses in the green field on the other side of the river. But then these homes are put to the test by a misunderstood wolf who has a little bit of a problem. And who is the grumpy person who lives under the bridge?

The Three Billy Pigs is the new show from Noisy Oyster for children of 3 years and over. The show blends two classic fairy tales *The Three Little Pigs* and *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* with beautifully crafted puppets, light hearted story telling, live music and a little bit of eco-awareness in a pig stylie.

Running Time: 45 minutes

Tickets: £6/ £20 family tickets (4 tickets).

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Batsford
ARBORETUM & GARDEN CENTRE

Enjoy spectacular autumn colour as Batsford's maples and cherries take centre stage in a blaze of reds, yellows, oranges and golds. With gorgeous home-baked food and a packed garden **shop - including spring flowering bulbs and the new season's** seeds, you'll be spoilt for choice at beautiful Batsford.

Call our hotline on 01386 701441 for updates on the autumn colour
Winner of Cotswold Tourism's Large Visitor Attraction of the Year 2013

Batsford Arboretum and Garden Centre
Batsford Arboretum and Plant Centre, Batsford,
Moreton in Marsh, Gloucestershire GL56 9AB
Tel: 01386 701441 Email: arboretum@batsfordfoundation.co.uk
www.batsarb.co.uk Open daily 10am - 5pm

Four Shires October 2013.indd 16 23/09/2013 19:06:26

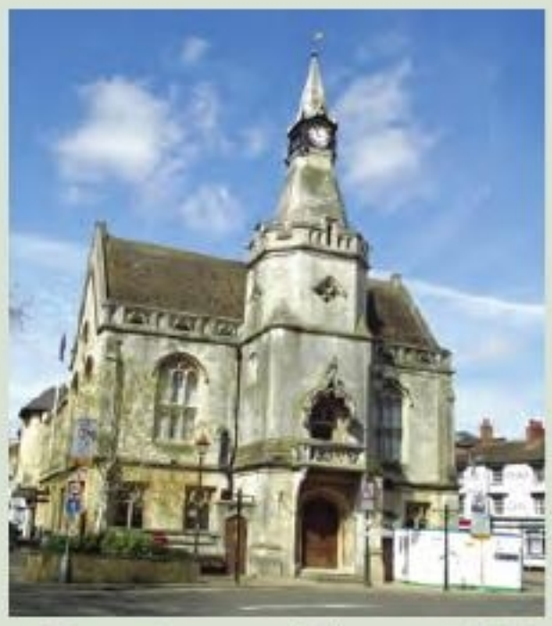
KATHARINE HOUSE HOSPICE - MAKE A WILL WEEK 14th to 18th October

Having a baby, changing job, retiring, becoming grandparents, getting married or divorced

Katharine House Hospice is holding its second 'Make a Will Week' from 14th – 18th October 2013. Over 20 local solicitors and will writers are generously donating their time and expertise and will write a basic or standard will or update your existing will in return for a donation to the hospice. About 50% of the UK population do not have a will, yet it is relatively straightforward to organise and makes matters so much easier for those left behind. No one knows what the future holds, so take this opportunity to ensure your loved ones are taken care of.

There is no obligation to remember Katharine House in your will, but if you choose to do so, the hospice will be extremely grateful as legacies are a vital source of income.

For further details, contact Sheila Norton on 01295 812161 or visit www.kk.org.uk



CHARITY GALA SHOW at Town Hall

Banbury Town Hall, October 4, 7pm- 10.45pm

Local artiste Shona Shuffles will be appearing with guests including 80s star Hazell Dean and 90s pop star Nicki French. There will be local singers and entertainers Jodie Brooker, Paul Charles, Ellie, Rosie Samaras and the Sharon Green Dance Acadamy. This event raises money for the Katharine House Hospice, Terrence Higgins Trust and the Town Mayor's Charities. £10 to include a drink on arrival, table nibbles and the show. There will be a bar and raffle during the evening. Doors 7pm.Please call or e-mail for tickets. Groups of 10+ can reserve a table. Town Hall, Bridge Street, OX16 5QB Banbury, 07786987034, joelusmaximus@gmail.com, £10 18+

The Katharine House Hospice

Make a Will Week 14th - 18th October 2013

Make your Will NOW and benefit Katharine House

Local solicitors and will writers have generously agreed to waive their fees and prepare a basic or standard Will or update your existing Will in return for a donation to Katharine House Hospice.

Call any participating solicitor or will writer and arrange a mutually convenient time to meet between Monday, 14th and Friday, 18th October.

You never know when something will change your life -

take this opportunity to ensure your loved ones are taken care of

For further details of Make a Will Week phone Sheila Norton on 01295 812161 or visit www.khh.org.uk

BANBURY:
Aplins - Robert Henshaw 01295 251234
Bower & Bailey - Phil Cooksey 01295 265566
Brethertons - Sophie Wales or Kate Mahon 01295 661440
Cotswold Family Law - Nicky Gough 01608 686590
Hancocks - Michael Barlow or Toni Peppard 01295 253211
Johnson & Gaunt - Sarah Horton 01295 759400
Leport & Co - Danielle Plant or Holly Pearce 01295 257328/268181
Spratt Endicott - Lucy Gordon or Tom McInerney 01295 204000

BICESTER:
Brethertons Neasham Lloyd - Abigail Howson 01869 252161
Bicester Wills - Gail Church 01869 244329

BRACKLEY:
Three Shires Wills - David Smith 01280 840388

CARTERTON:
West Oxon Wills - Mark Gorman 01993 220281

CHIPPING NORTON:
Bradley Saul - Geoffrey Saul or Philippa Rumary 01608 648020
Denis Wynn & Co - Denis Wynn 01608 643036
Dyakowski Gafford - Geoffrey Gafford 01608 643051

WOODFORD HALSE:
Tim Williams 01327 261262

WOODSTOCK:
Woodstock Wills - Gail Church 01869 244329

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artclass

with Barry Whitehouse

THE ARTERY, WHITE LION WALK

THE ARTY BIT

NEW WAYS TO PROMOTE AND SELL YOUR WORK

It cannot be denied that the recession has hit the art world badly and artists have been naturally concerned that people will have the same thirst for purchasing original, local art by unknown artists as they once did. Obviously, high end art is still as popular, but I am talking about the average village art group and how they struggle to sell their work. Many towns do not have gallery spaces, and those artists starting out can't always afford the commission if they do have one locally.

What are the options?

We are all familiar with the art shows at local churches and village halls which work in promoting the art group locally, but not always yielding high sales. There are now other ways: So many people are waking up to the idea of using Social Media to promote their art work. It is free and can reach thousands of people within hours and some artists locally sell their work as soon as they post it on *Facebook or Twitter.*

I have also been privileged to attend art group exhibitions in various interesting venues. Art groups are now taking their paintings where people are, instead of hoping that people will come to them! For example, last year I attended Farthinghoe Art Group's exhibition in Middleton Cheney library. During their preview evening one painting was sold every ten minutes. The month long exhibition was a success and library users and art lovers united to become viewers and buyers of the art.

In August I attended The Parched Artists exhibition being held in an evening in gazebos in a pub garden. The group are young and have a modern approach to exhibiting – reaching their target age audience by taking the art to where they know those people will be and are likely to spend money on buying art. The one day/night exhibition was held in the garden of The Wine Vaults in Banbury town centre and was hugely popular and there was even a barbecue available for those visiting the art work. I thought this was a great way to showcase work and reach a different audience.

Similarly, in September, Great Bourton Art Group took a stand at the Bourton's Big Fete and had over 40 paintings for sale. Many were sold and it really got people to see not only the talent on their doorstep, but also the work of an art group that they may not have seen or heard of previously. It pays to think outside the box when promoting and selling your art work. It is so important to reach the right audience for your work, even if it means finding different ways and places to do this.

ART DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

BANBURY AND DISTRICT SRT SOCIETY

The group's monthly meeting will be on Thursday 3rd September with a talk and acrylic demonstration on *'Wildlife in the Landscape'* by Sarais Crawshaw. The Art Society meets at the WRVS Cornhill Centre in Banbury. Friends and visitors welcome. Only £3.00 on the door.

THE ARTERY

The Artery, White Lion Walk, Banbury has a Free 45 minute Art Demonstration on Saturday 26th November at 11am this month showing simple drawing techniques. Regular weekday watercolour workshops including *'Autumn Birch Trees', 'The Ruins of Hampton Gay Manor', 'Stonehenge at Dusk, 'Sunset Over Llandudno Beach'* and *'Frosty Morn at St Peter's Church, Kineton'*. Call 01295 275150 to book your place or for more information or visit www.thearteryonline.co.uk to see all our workshops

FARTHINHOE ART GROUP

There will be an art exhibition at Middleton Cheney library from the 5th to the 28th October. Admission is free. Farthinghoe Art Group has been meeting for many years with beginners, 'dabblers', and semi-professional artists attending. The style and medium of work on display is vast and varied.

ABINGDON CONTEMPORARY CRAFTS FOR CHRISTMAS

ACF Craft Fairs are delighted to announce the return of the popular Abingdon Crafts for Christmas, held at the Historic Abbey Buildings.Held at the Medievil Abbey Buildings, Abingdon Oxfordshire OX14 3JB, on Thursday 17 Oct 2013 to Sun 20 Oct, Fri 25 Oct to Sun 27 Oct

HILLIERS GARDEN CENTRE

New Art Class at Hilliers Garden Centre, Banbury. A new adult watercolour class will be held each month in the garden centre café. Sunday 13th October 10am-1pm starts this exciting new addition with the theme of *Painting Skies*. Total beginners, dabblers and improvers are welcome. It costs £10 per person. To book your place or ask for further details, call 01295 275150

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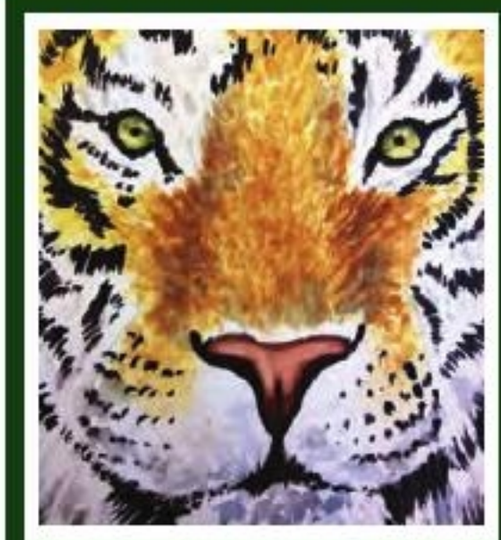
artsurgery

PAINTING A TIGER IN WATERCOLOUR

Painting fur can be tricky, but by always using your palest colour first and gradually adding darker tones, fur texture may be easier than you think. I have chosen a tiger because of the different coloured bands of fur that meet each other. It is not only a good challenge but a great way to learn the technique to then use on other animals – maybe your pet cat or dog!

YOU WILL NEED:

- Watercolour paints in yellow ochre, burnt sienna, ultramanne, alizann crimson and payne's grey
- A number 8 round watercolour brush (make sure it has a good point)
- A 2B pencil
- A water pot
- A palette



STEP 1: Draw your outline. Make sure you mark where the dark stripes will be. The stripes will be the darkest colour on the painting, so the pencil lines won't show through.

STEP 2: Paint a very pale yellow ochre wash (use a lot of water and little paint) over the parts of the body that have coloured fur, even the parts that have black fur. Leave the paper white for where the white fur will be.

STEP 3: Mix a little burnt sienna with yellow ochre and add 'flicks' of it onto the dry ochre base. You need enough water to make the paint flow, but not too much to make it run everywhere.

STEP 4: Mix a little more Burnt Sienna with Yellow Ochre and add more 'flicks' on the nose area. Concentrate on either side of the nose with the darkest colour. As you paint the top of the nose, use a stippling action as the fur is shorter here.

STEP 5: For the eyes, mix a little ultramarine to yellow ochre to make a hazel green. Paint the whole eye in this, adding more ultramarine into the mix for the top part. Lift out highlights, creating a small curve on the lower part of the eye and a dot of light at the top of the eye.

STEP 6: Use payne's grey for the darker fur. The paint needs to be a strong consistency but fluid enough to move. Flick the paint out at either end to give the impression of growing fur. By only flicking out at one end, the fur doesn't look quite right.

STEP 7: Mix a little alizarin crimson with burnt sienna for the nose. Paint it in following the shape and when dry, lift out the highlights.

STEP 8: Mix more water with the payne's grey on your palette to make a very pale grey. This is used to add texture and shadow to the white fur. Be careful not to add too much. This is not grey fur, but thick white fur with shading.

STEP 9: Finally, mix a little yellow ochre with burnt sienna to make a dark green. This is used for the background. Flick down into the tiger's fur the make the fur look like it is in front of the background.

HERE A FEW OTHER ANIMALS YOU CAN PAINT USING THE SAME TECHNIQUES

Four Shires October 2013.indd 19 12/09/2013 11:15:33

LAUNCH OF 'THE AUTENTICO PAINT' COLLECTION AT BRACKLEY ANTIQUES CENTRE LAST MONTH

Over 40 guests attended the launch evening of Autentico paints at the Brackley Antiques Cellar last month.

Autentico founders Ris and Eric Adams gave a presentation to designers and antiques specialists at the Northamptonshire centre.

Following the presentation guests enjoyed a glass of wine and a question and answer session co – hosted by the antiques centre's Debbe Perry

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Pictures by Jeremy Wilton show:
1: Ris Adams, Debbe Perry and Eric Adams 2: Jan Walsh, Linda Sweales and Gill Bryan 3: Susan Connolly, Liz Savory and Jo Laybourn 4: Liane Hancox, Lynn Cherry and Sian Williams 5: Jackie Heskin, Jayne Crofts and Catherine Tildesley 6: Kristel Drozd and Clare Jakeman 7: Graham and Tina Howkins 8: Marina McKay 9: Lynnette Crane and Ann Wetherill 10: Diane Baldry, Liz O'Donnell, Jacqui and Paul Guise 11: Carole and Bob Moore

Four Shires October 2013.indd 20 23/09/2013 11:52:11

Bonhams 1793

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Thursday 31st October, 10am to 3pm

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Our specialists will be available to offer free valuations on items that you may be considering selling at auction. Valuations are free of charge and without obligation.

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A pair of diamond pendent earrings
The two old brilliant-cut diamonds, weighing 10.16 and 10.35 carats, suspended from an articulated row of similarly-cut diamonds, remaining diamonds approximately 4.00 carats total, length 4.5cm
Sold for £150,000

International Auctioneers and Valuers - **bonhams.com/oxford**
Values stated include buyer's premium. Details can be found at bonhams.com

Four Shires October 2013.indd 21 04/09/2013 09:34:57

A bespoke amethyst ring by Sybil Dunlop. SOLD for: £6,000

A large gold cigar box, purchased from Fattorini & Sons Ltd. SOLD for £8,200

VALUATION DAYS AT HOLLOWAY'S AUCTIONEERS

Experts at Holloway's Auctioneers in Banbury are available every Thursday from 9.30am until 4.30pm at their Parsons Street saleroom to provide you with free verbal valuations on any items you are interested in selling.

The vendors of the items shown in the images illustrated all attended one of Holloway's valuation days where experts were able to tell them more about the items and provide an estimate on their value. Holloway's make sure they bring all buyers to the saleroom, both at home and abroad, in person and online through live bidding, ensuring the highest prices are reached. The vendors were really pleased with the prices realised at auction.

A jewellery specialist is available on certain Thursdays (next available day is 24 October) and you can contact the office on 01295 817777 to secure an appointment.

If you are unable to attend on a Thursday or have heavy or large items, the experts can give you advice from images. You can email images (high res is preferable) with as much information about the object/s as possible to images@hollowaysauctioneers.co.uk.

Holloway's Auctioneers hold regular Antiques and Fine Art sales which attract buyers from all over the world. The sales include a broad range of categories including, but not limited to, jewellery and watches, silver and plate, European and Oriental Ceramics, glass, works of art and sculpture, books and ephemera, prints and maps, oil paintings, watercolours and drawings, metalwares, collectors' items and curiosities, textiles and rugs, clocks, barometers and scientific instruments, garden items and furniture.

Their next sale of Antiques and Fine Art will be held on Tuesday 10 December, closing date for entries is Monday 11 November.

Further information can be found by emailing: enquiries@hollowaysauctioneers or calling 01295 817777. Alternitvely why not have a look at their website: www.hollowaysauctioneers.co.uk.

Two 18th century silver toddy bowls. SOLD for: £2,500 (one pictured)

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10 November

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Four Shires October 2013.indd 23 19/09/2013 13:48:04

Peter Jones takes a walk near Shipston on Stour

Favourite WALKS

When I started these walks a couple of years back they were very much based on simply 'going off, following my nose and exploring' - naturally these have evolved and now, much more planning goes into them.

Start and end points are now chosen. Normally, this is a pub – there is a reasonable amount of research put into the route and then, off we go. This month however (with my usual walking partner) we go back to our roots, and go off exploring with no real plan other than to be back in Shipston on Stour town centre by lunchtime.

When I was a little boy I often got up to mischief and there is a very fine line between mischief and getting into trouble! On these walks, my partner, Roger and I are like a couple of little boys and last month we very nearly got into trouble.

So with the editor's advice to: 'stay out of trouble and visit lots of churches' we set off to Shipston on Stour.

We drove there on the back road from Tysoe to Honnington - a great driver's road with nice sweeping bends and fabulous views across the Warwickshire countryside.

En route we met members of the Warwickshire Hunt and a lady milking a couple of goats. We got spooked by a barn owl and stopped to photograph a herd of water buffalo…all before 7am!

As you approach Shipston on Stour on the Banbury Road there is a free car park on your right and it's from here that we started our walk. Retracing our steps back over the bridge we crossed the road and went through a gate that was very well signed as to where we could and where we could not go.

The first surprise of the day was seeing the direction the river flows, I have lived in this area all my life and I always thought the Stour flowed north to south, its source is near Swalcliffe and it enters the River Avon near the racecourse in Stratford upon Avon, I couldn't have been more wrong.

There are two things that I have always wanted to see: kingfishers and whales diving, I suspect the chance of seeing a whale in the River Stour is slim but the river is teeming with kingfishers, though you do have to sit still to catch them.

We keep the river to our right and follow it for a short distance to the village of Barcheston. The Parish Church of St Martins appears over the trees, though there is something that does not look quite right and this becomes much more obvious when we reach it.

The oldest parts of the church date from the 12th Century but it is the tower that is the star! It leans and this is so pronounced that the church should be known as 'The Pisa of Warwickshire'!

One of the glories of St Martin's is the 16th century alabaster table tomb of William Willington and his wife Anne in the south aisle, built to house this fine monument. It was Willington who depopulated the old medieval village and enclosed the land. This explains why, apart from the Rectory and Manor House, where he lived, the church stands virtually alone in open countryside.

On these walks we often come across water pumps and Barcheston has three of them all within a few feet of each other. Despite our efforts none of them could be made to work.

We return to the footpath and continue south to the village of Willington. There are some great picnic spots on the river bank, though sadly, some people choose to leave their bottles and crisp packets behind!

We explore the village which is a mix of old and modern.

Four Shires October 2013.indd 24 23/09/2013 12:01:37

where the village of Burmington lies about a mile in front of us. There is a great deal of evidence of badger activity in these fields and loads of plums, damsons and cob nuts on the trees. Coincidentally, it is the first day of the cob nut season!

To our right, in the distance, we could see a rather grand property with what looked like its own church in the grounds... we will get to this a little later.

Burmington is our third village in just three miles and we come out opposite our second church of the day, St Barnabas and St Nicholas. There has been a church there for over 800 years, built by the Lord of Burmington to save villagers the three mile walk to Wolford for mass on Sundays.

It is a pretty little church where we find yet another commonwealth war grave in the churchyard and the usual war memorial in the church.

One of the things we have learnt about over the past couple of years is the existence of "Thankful Villages". These are the 52 civil parishes where every soldier who went off to war, returned. 14 of these are 'double thankful villages' where a soldier was in the Second World War also. Oxfordshire and Warwickshire have none - but the closest to Banbury is the somewhat aptly named Upper Slaughter!

We set off in search of a coffee passing a well restored granary supported on staddle stones. These were supposed to keep the rats from reaching the grain. A gentleman tending his garden in front of a rather grand house asked if he could help and very kindly invited us in and not only made us coffee but gave us biscuits as well.

The plaques on his wall indicated an RAF career and, indeed, he was a former navigator on Avro Vulcan Bombers. He had recently celebrated his 60th wedding anniversary and somewhat romantically took his wife on a road trip to all the RAF bases they had been stationed at!

He introduced us to a new word, 'Terrier'. Specific to the Church of England the Terrier is an inventory of Church lands, chattels and all other items. It derives its name from the French word for land, 'Terroir', originally started in the late 16th century many are in county record offices.

Our host was updating the 'Terrier' for Burmington and discovered a document relating to the church silver which no one in the Parish could remember having seen for many years! A bit of detective work was carried out and it was discovered nice and safe in the strong room of the local HSBC in nearby Shipston!

Our host was a proper gentleman with a fund of stories and he makes a pretty good cup of coffee too!

We retrace our steps back through the village to the very busy A34 main Oxford Road and turn north on the footpath. In just a few yards we cross the river where we cross over into the lane opposite, but before we do that we carry on a little further to the church we could see earlier from across the fields.

This is the Church of the Ascension, which until 1931 was in Worcestershire. Built in 1300 it was restored in 1874 and is a very pretty church. This one too has a leaning tower and there are some very interesting tombs in the churchyard.

Now, as we were conscious of staying out of trouble - we did not climb the fence to look at the manor house next door, so we missed out on the giant acorns on the lawn, the lovely garden and the fleet of expensive cars in the drive with personalised plates! We understand the house is owned by a family who make the world's largest diggers (they are painted yellow).

As we backtrack to the lane by the river we hear a sound like an approaching express train and three ladies complete with Nordic sticks, water bottles, maps and proper walking boots zoom past us.

A brief conversation revealed they were enroute from Oxford to Stratford. Having watched their speed we have downgraded the description of our walks to ambles - for that's what we really do - around some of the best countryside there is.

Carefully crossing the busy A34 we pass an old 19th century mill on our left and head west on a nice quiet lane. With the river now on our left, we meet the local postman emptying a box which appears to be in the middle of nowhere! He tells us he has the best job in the world, free uniform, company car, fresh air, great pension and as many cups of tea and slices of toast as he wants!

There is a right turn in a short while that takes us north where in 200 yards we take a walk down the drive to Horseleys Farm. Here are some lovely conversions of redundant farm buildings and after a short distance we turn north again passing through a turnstile onto a footpath/bridle way that takes us back to Shipston.

This is a steady climb during which we cross 'pig brook' and across fields. This is an old mediaeval footpath that linked Todenham and Shipston. The harvest is well underway and before you know it we are on the Chipping Campden road in Shipston – with just a short walk to the market square.

Shipston is a proper old market town that deserves a separate walk of its own. A butchers, a fishmonger, greengrocers and watchmakers all surround the square. We choose one of the many pubs in the centre for lunch and enjoy the 'pensioners two course lunchtime special for £10'. (The house wine at £10 was, without doubt, the roughest stuff either of us have ever drunk).

But no worries, there is a French expression: "Mettre de l'eau dans son vin'. Which means: to water down one's wine. This is no longer common practice in France, but it makes a rough wine very drinkable!

So there's another walk done and we stayed out of trouble, unlike the lady on the phone we met at 7.30am in the woods, who was on her mobile saying: 'Come round at six, he's on nights this week - we will be ok"!

I am sure this was all perfectly inncocent!

Next month we head east.

PETER JONES *meets*... John Lingwood

Possibly the most famous words in English football are: "Some people are on the pitch... they think it's all over... it is now!" part of the late Kenneth Wostenholmes TV commentary of the 1966 World Cup Final when England beat Germany in July 1966.

One of those three boys, then aged 15, who ran onto the pitch lives in a village just north of Banbury and is my guest for this month's chat. Although to be fair, he had invited me to his house where he invited me round for a meal and a couple of bottles of red!

I am talking to John Lingwood, who has lived since the end of the 1990s in north Oxfordshire and is a 'Rock Drummer'.

All little boys want to be either pilots, racing drivers or rock stars when they grow up. John has been one of those and was almost good enough to become one of the others!

As a youngster:

'I was a very good footballer and had been offered a few trials, but at the same time I started playing...I got a drum kit when I was about 12 and that sort of took over. But, I've met a lot of musicians who were good footballers.

'There were three of us who ran on to the pitch. It got to just before the end of the 90 minutes. We had decided right at the beginning of the World Cup that if England got to the final we were going to get on the pitch - but not as a hooligan thing or anything like that!'

So England got there, they got to the final and were 2-1 up. We went down from behind the goal and on to the bench seats. Suddenly, Germany equalised, so we were down there for the rest of extra time. Then, when the referee did put his whistle in his mouth, we went for it. Because everyone was whistling, you know, we went on to the pitch. Now there were two guys, cousins, that I used to go to school with, both called Des Carville – they had the same name, and me. When we ran on another person ran on at the same time as us and that was it. I only got to just over the touch line, and I thought 'blimey' and ran back!

One of my mates was right by the penalty area, you can see on the film'.

Could you always play the drums?

'When I first sat behind a drum kit, I could immediately play. I'd started off playing guitar and I actually said to Bert Weedon, "I cheated when I got your book"!'

I was playing with a couple of guys from school and their dad played on *Lady Madonna* and a few things, Bill Povey his name was. I was in a band with Vincent, his brother. Anyway, the drummer had a little toy drum kit and then he got this new glitter kit, I don't know what it was, but it looked good and I said 'can I have a go'. I sat down and straight away I knew - I said this is what I'm gonna do. I used to play with a few people at school, but the first first band I played in, I can't really remember...'

John started working in a Soho drum shop, the legendary Doc Hunts, before begining to perform full time. Initially with Steamhammer before becoming Leo Sayer's drummer and then becoming a member of the bands that played the West End shows: *Hair, Jesus Christ Superstar* and *The Rocky Horror show.*

He was the drummer for almost ten years in the 1980s with *Manfred Manns Earthband* and he featured on the albums: *Chance, Somewhere in Afrika, Budapest Live, Criminal Tango* and *Masque.*

Since leaving the band he has performed with Bernie Marsden and *Company Of Snakes* between 1998 and 2002, featuring on the live album *'Here They Go Again'* and the studio album *'Burst the Bubble'.*

Still playing, he is often with Roger Chapman's backing band, *the Short List,* and only recently performed with Chapman at a rock festival in Germany with Steve Winwood, Status Quo and the legendary ZZ Top.

Ironically, if he had gone down the football route he would have been able to stop training years ago, but rock drummers need to be fit and that means playing every day.

He moved to this area from Watford.

One of his fellow musicians lived in Long Compton and on their many visits to the area John and his wife fell in love with it.

John is a devoted family man. He lives with his clothes designer wife, Kath, in a converted methodist Chapel. His daughter lives locally and his four year old grandson already has his first set of drums and is about to get his first electric guitar!

John is very popular in his Four Shires' village and has time for everyone.

He is also a very good cook, who puts great stock on using fresh food... he shops almost on a daily basis. When we met, he knocked up a pretty mean pasta and prawn dish with more than a hint of chilli - super - though his taste in red wine leaves a bit to be desired.

Next month, a heavyweight politician...

Four Shires October 2013.indd 26 23/09/2013 12:02:53

OVER £40,000 RAISED AT CHARITY BALL

The Wormleighton Hall 'Glitz and Glamour Summer Extravaganza' raised over £40,000 for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust recently, with 800 people dining and dancing on two dance floors with live music, a mini casino, and money raised at auction matched pound for pound by a High Street bank. 'Fascinating Aida' provided their own unique brand of entertainment, and a very moving speech was given by Henry Burton who has cystic fibrosis. Survivors emerged into the sunlight at 5.30am!

Pictures by Jonathan Wain

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Pictures show: 1: Debbie James, Mike Stevens, Sally James, Laura Lucas, Sarah Franklin and Rhiannon Szmigielski 2: Amber Tilleard, Fiona Warren and Lexy Besterman 3: Jamie Stewart and Rachael Catton 4: Emily Mancini and Bex Turner 5: Andrew Wadland, Stephen Platts and Stephen Humphreys 6: Will Dronfield, Jo Knott, Hannah Matthews, Alex Ferris and Joe Hibbert 7: Charlotte Bestley and Lucy Martin 8: Jager Girls Lisa Oakley, Jo Beales and Chloe Ely 9: Harry Grantham, Charles Smith, Billy Arahamian, Chris Tweat and Roddy Cash 10: Will Moreton and Charlie Moreton 'Wolf Run' sponsors with organiser Isabel Gutteridge 11: James Hiatt and Anthony MacKenzie 12: Jonathan Wain and Jay Adams 13: Amy Brown and Sam Higgs 14: Adam and Ruth Khalil 15: Rob Graves and Sophie Barwood

Four Shires October 2013.indd 27 23/09/2013 19:21:19

GET YOUR HOME READY FOR THE COLDER MONTHS

Tips to prepare your home for a warmer winter:

• **Update insulation**: Not only could a poorly insulated home ean a higher thermostat, it could also lower your disposable income. Think about updating your home's insulation is an investment that will pay its due come the colder months. Key places to check your insultation are: Crawlspaces, attics, floors, walls, ductwork of heating and air-conditioning systems and over garages.

• **Repair your roof**

Check your roof now to make sure it is in good order. Things to focus on when mainting a roof are: to trim away any overgrown vegetation encrouching on to it or better still remove it all together, clean debris off the roof and inside the gutters before hosing them down, remove crinkled caulking and roofing cement and reapply where needed, check flashing for warps and holes and secure with roofing cement, apply roofing cement under loose asphalt shingles, check and clear vents of obstructions. (It may be safer to get a professional in to do the mentioned jobs as they can prove dangerous.)

• **Replace old doors**: When the colder months come calling, doors are a favorite point of entry. Even if they appear closed, cold air can travel through them with the greatest of ease when they're outdated or in bad shape.

• **Replace old windows:**

Windows are also potential passageways for air leaks - and human intruders, too - when they have missing or cracked panes and broken latches. It is important to replace these where neccesary before winter arrives.

market comment

Matthew Allen of Fisher German Estate Agents reviews recent market activity for people thinking of selling this year

"still limited supply in some price brackets"

- house prices up 5.6% in South East
- 60,000+ mortgage approvals in July
- calls for 5% house price cap
- competitive bidding above guides on some houses

Contact Matthew at matthew.allen@fishergerman.co.uk • 01295 271555 • www.fishergerman.co.uk

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- guide price £1,950,000

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secluded country house with land

- 2 impressive reception rooms
- kitchen/breakfast room, studio
- 3 bedrooms, study/bedroom 4
- swimming pool, gardens, outbuildings
- paddock, in all about 1.7 acres
- EPC rating E
- **guide price £850,000**

Weston, Northamptonshire

quintessential period cottage

- sitting/dining room, family room
- garden room, quality kitchen, utility
- 3 bedrooms, 1 en-suite, 1 bathroom
- landscaped garden, summerhouse
- adjoining pasture land to the rear
- EPC rating D
- **guide price £450,000**

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FENNY COMPTON £425,000

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DEDDINGTON £369,950

A BEAUTIFULLY APPOINTED FOUR BEDROOMED DETACHED HOUSE LOCATED WITHIN THIS SOUGHT AFTER DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THIS HIGHLY REGARDED AND WELL SERVED VILLAGE

| Entrance Hall |Cloakroom/WC| Open plan sitting room | re-fitted modern kitchen | Conservatory | Master bedroom with en-suite shower room | Three further bedrooms | Family bathroom | uPVC double glazing | Gas central heating | Off road car parking | Single garage | Enclosed rear garden | Energy rating D

MOLLINGTON £325,000

A VERY WELL PRESENTED AND SPACIOUS DETACHED NON-ESTATE BUNGALOW OCCUPYING A LARGE ELEVATED SITE WITH FAR REACHING VIEWS

| Porch | Hall | Sitting room | Large kitchen/dining room | Utility | Inner Hall | Two double bedrooms | Shower room and seperate luxury bathroom | Oil Central heating via radiators | Large garage | Large well tended gardens | Energy rating D

SIBFORD FERRIS £325,000

A SPACIOUS AND ELEGANT GROUND FLOOR APARTMENT IN A BEAUTIFULLY RESTORED 18TH CENTURY MANOR HOUSE

|Communal entrance hall | Hallway | Sitting room | Dining room | Kitchen | Utility room | Two bedrooms | Two bathrooms | Communal gardens | Central heating | Single garage | One parking space | Energy rating E

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WROXTON

- £795 PCM

A SPACIOUS TWO BEDROOMED STONE COTTAGE WITHIN A COURTYARD SETTING LOCATED IN THIS PICTURESQUE VILLAGE TO THE NORTH WEST OF BANBURY

| Hall | sitting room/dining room with inglenook fireplace and wood burner | cloak room | kitchen | utility room | two double bedrooms with built in wardrobes | family bathroom | courtyard garden to rear and parking |
Energy Rating F

UNFURNISHED AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY

WILLIAMSCOT

- £795 PCM

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO RENT THIS PRETTY BARN CONVERSION SITUATED IN THIS RURAL VILLAGE NORTH OF BANBURY WITH EASY ACCESS TO THE M40 MOTORWAY AND BANBURY TOWN CENTRE

| Hallway | two double bedrooms | family bathroom to ground floor | open plan living room/dining room | fitted kitchen to first floor | allocated parking | small front garden |
Would suit professional couple
Energy rating C

FULLY FURNISHED AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY

GREATWORTH

- £1,500 PCM

A VERY SPACIOUS BEAUTIFULLY PRESENTED FOUR BEDROOMED DETACHED HOUSE SITUATED IN A 'NO THROUGH ROAD' IN THIS QUIET VILLAGE EAST OF BANBURY

| Hallway | fitted kitchen with integrated appliances | very large utility room | walk in pantry | lounge with open fireplace | dining room | three double bedrooms, one with balcony | one single bedroom | family bathroom |seperate shower room | garage with off street parking for several cars | pretty, well stocked gardens |
Energy rating E

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WROXTON

- £850 PCM

A THREE BEDROOMED STONE COTTAGE WITHIN A COURTYARD SETTING LOCATED IN THIS PICTURESQUE VILLAGE TO THE NORTH WEST OF BANBURY

| Large entrance hall | kitchen breakfast room | sitting room with open fire | three bedrooms with built in wardrobes | family bathroom | garden to rear and parking |
Energy rating E

UNFURNISHED AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY

WOODFORD HALSE

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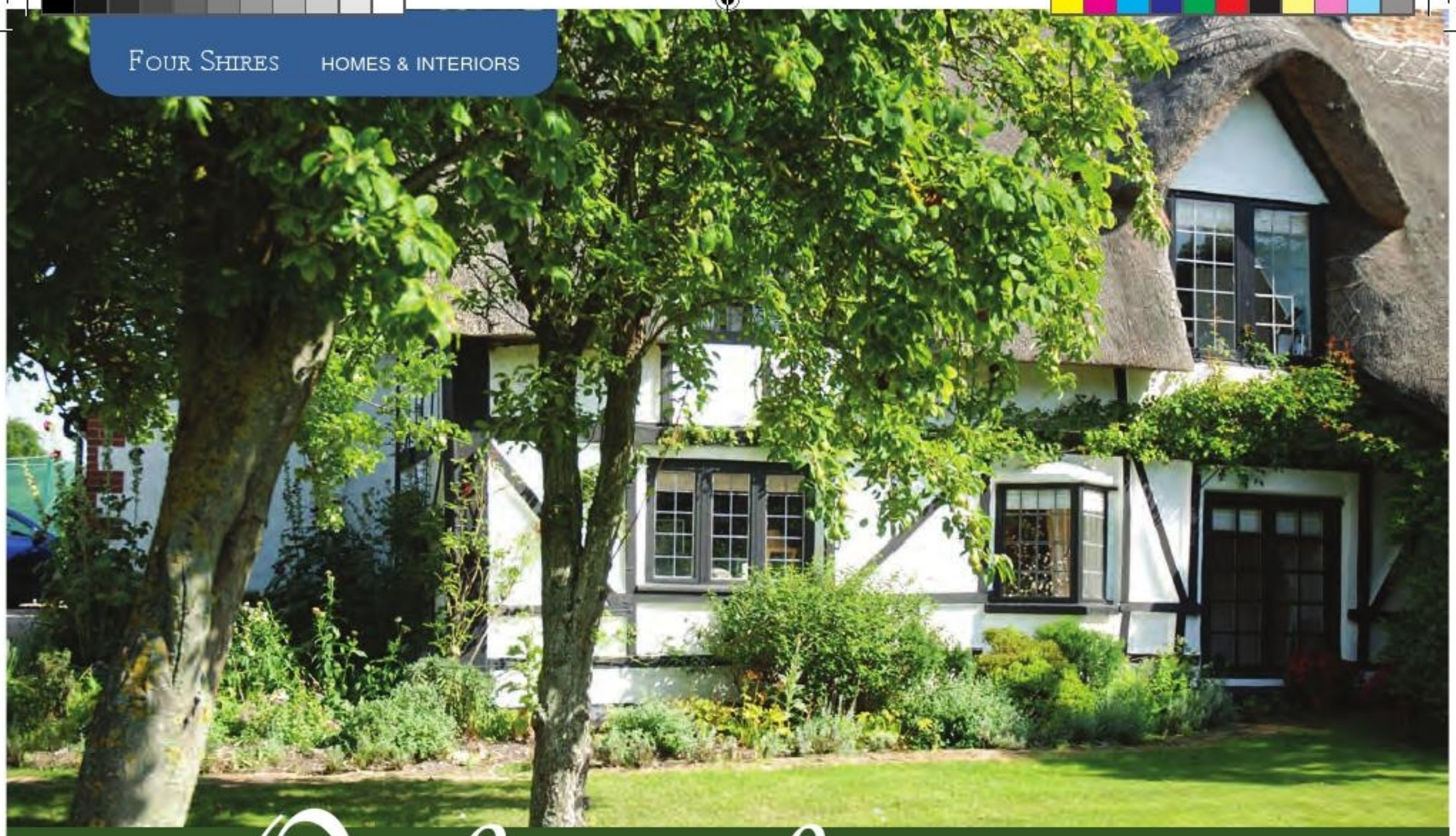


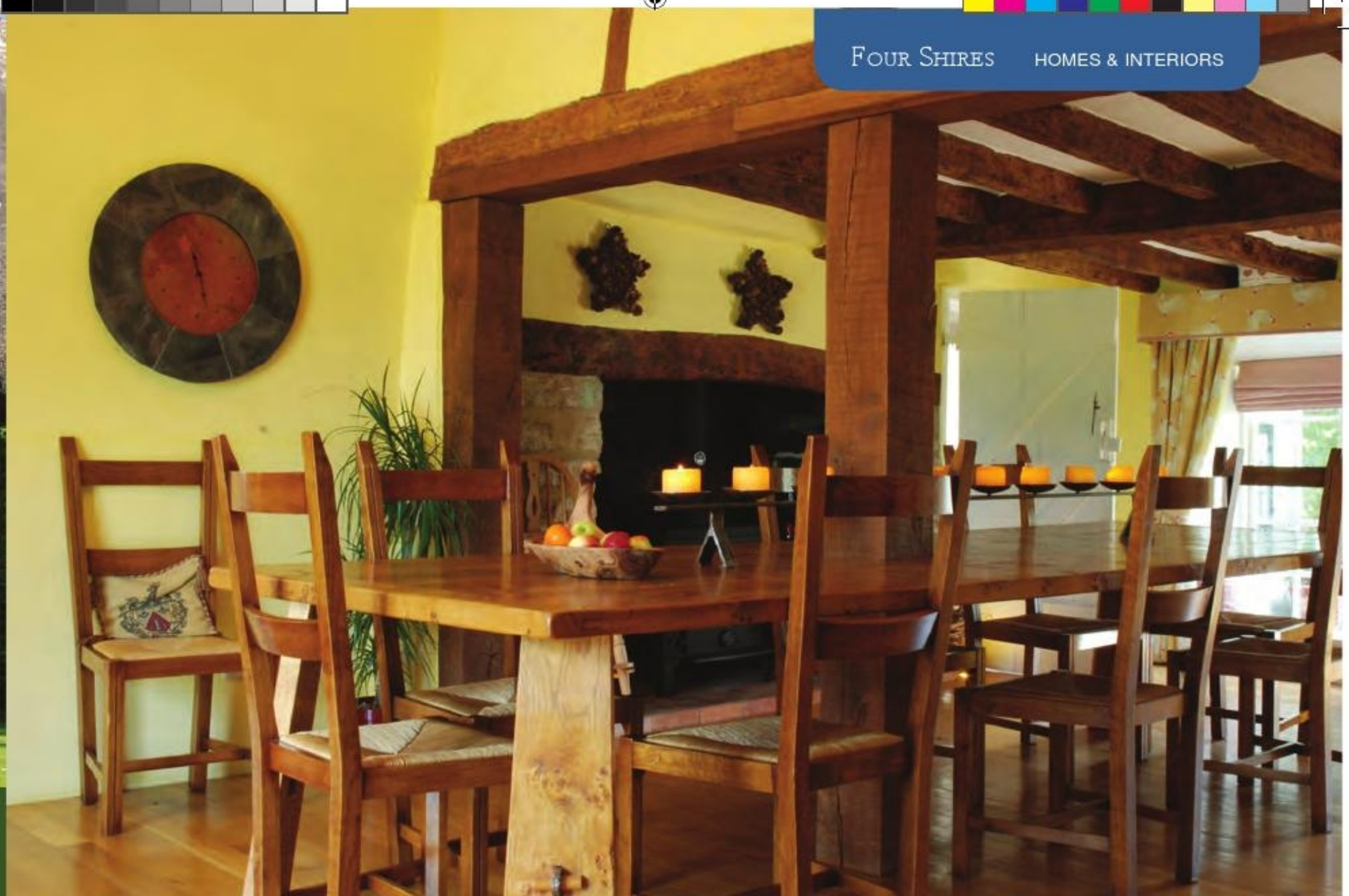
AN *Oxfordshire* COTTAGE

Wildlife sculptor Rosamond Lloyd lives in Newington. She took on Farthynge Cottage as a 'work in progress' eight years ago. With its beautiful farmland setting, deep thatch, original oak frame and heavily beamed interior, the grade II listed cottage had instant appeal, but was in need of a little attention and a creative approach to interior design.

The old external wall of the cottage has become the internal wall of a new kitchen extension, which continues into a vaulted living room, heavily contrasting with an adjoining characterful snug room with open log fire. The ceilings throughout the original cottage are a mixture of painted beams and exposed woodwork.

Rosamond spent many weeks sandblasting to take the painted beams of the dining room down to their original oak. She surmounted the problem of a supporting beam in the middle of the dining room, by constructing on site, a beautiful burr oak dining table around the beam, turning it into a focal point of the property. Rosamond has converted a double garage into a working sculptor's studio with full length glass windows overlooking the adjoining fields and grazing cattle.

Four Shires October 2013.indd 34 24/09/2013 09:13:31



Rosamond's forthcoming show *Bronze Black & White* will take place at Royal Opera Arcade Gallery, Pall Mall London from 18 - 30 November 2013.

The show will include a bronze commissioned by Cotswold Wildlife Park – 'rhino and calf', - The first to be born there for 43 years.

Four Shires October 2013.indd 35 23/09/2013 19:24:38

Hannah Baud
- Velvet Eccentric -

SHADES OF AUTUMN

- Autumn trends 2013 -

After the most glorious summer the world of interiors has revealed what's trending this season for autumn/winter 2013. According to '*Global Color Research*', the four major trends that are influencing colour and pattern for the upcoming season are described under the umbrella headings of 'Flint,' 'Storm,' 'Clash' and 'Alpine.' We're talking about four categories encompassing rich colours to invigorate, precious metals, practical –yet-striking multipurpose furniture and beautiful, timeless, natural materials. So whether you're seeking a subtle style, or something more dramatic, there's something to inspire everyone.

I'm absolutely loving the 'Alpine' trend, but we're not talking orange pine cladding! It's about bringing the colours and textures of the outdoors in. Think walks across misty fields, through dense moss-laden woodlands and the promise of winter. Larch, cedar and juniper colours abound. Green is such an effective colour to decorate with as there's a shade to go with every other colour, ranging from very light to dark. Tan-brown neutrals can be accented with berry-red and icy-blue. The 'forest' theme welcomes warm, natural and organic products and materials to be used in your space as much as possible. Wood should be a big focal point, whether as furniture or accessories. Contemporary décor is less about sleek, sterile lines in terms of form and more focused on the 'handmade,' revealing the imperfections of the piece. This has been called 'organic modernism.' Accessorise a little in wood, metal and marble if you want to achieve an up-to-date sharp modern look. I'm loving a handcrafted, whitewashed pine desk with iron legs, called **'Delwyn,' from anthropologie.eu.**

Over the past few months Velvet Eccentric has been having a love affair with more mature blues and complex greens for our client's homes and offices. We upholstered the Art Deco Chair (pictured left) in the deepest iris-coloured velvet, piped with lime green vintage satin and set against a petrol blue wall and kingfisher-coloured carpet for an atmospheric room in a creative agency. Beautiful and moody blues and blue-greens are on trend especially - rich shades of turquoise, teal, cerulean, sapphire and midnight blue. The *Pantone Colour of the Year* has been emerald and it's sparked an explosion in other clever variations of green, to add vibrancy and energy to any room. Deep forest greens are everywhere at the moment and the best examples can be seen in the stunning contemporary fabrics and wallpapers at **designersguild.com, sanderson-uk.com** and **wemyssfabrics.com.**

We're also enjoying the 'Clash' trend, especially when used on classic designs in new, bolder colourways, like on the Kartell Sled Chair from **grahamandgreen.co.uk** in yellow. Bold colours mix

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well with pastels in this scheme but the key to this trend is to use it with restraint. Used against neutral colours such as dark brown, pastels look much more grown up and less girlie. Pastels of pistachio, dusky pink and powder blue appear more sophisticated against colours such as cool greys. My least favourite scheme is 'Flint' - the 'primitive man' trend that offers rust tones (copper), rich earthy browns, slate and stone-coloured greys and bone and sand-coloured neutrals. Materials reflecting nature in its most basic state are a popular element.

Charcoal greys and sultry blues combine strength and restraint in the moody colour palette of 'Storm' which is really lighting our creative fires right now. *Dulux's* colour of 2013, Indigo Night (a purplish-blue) is just one example of the wonderful twilight shades out there, tinted with blues, greens and purples. We love the clever layering of ultra-darks and smoky shades, which can also be trimmed or accented cleverly. Metallic touches enrich this atmospheric scheme to add interest and texture. Decorating with matt gold and shiny copper is huge right now for example the stunning Leimu Lamp from **innes.co.uk** encapsulates this perfectly. They are made with a concrete base and copper-brown glass.

In summary, the following trends are going to be big over this autumn and winter:- sculpted marble; mixing materials such as concrete with glass and wood with marble; pastels with greys; twilight shades; forest greens; new naturals or organic modernism; glass; beautiful blues; organic curves.

Whitewashed pine desk with iron legs 'Delwyn,' from anthropologie.eu.

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So, how do we translate these trends into our homes? I've never been a slave to trends as it's easy to overuse them and make your home feel too contrived. You just need a little liberal sprinkling to make your heart race and keep abreast of current interior design. Perhaps through the introduction of a wall of petrol blue or deep moss green, through a piece of traditional furniture in an exciting colourway or using some modern mixed materials together? As always, it's all in the mix and the confidence with which you put it together.

It's key to know who you are and how your home makes you feel. Ask yourself which colours and designs you love. The best homes I've visited are a successful mixture of personality, warmth, fun, relaxation and beauty. Try to step outside the box a little and take a few risks. Some of my most favourite rooms include the unexpected. I'm taking a leaf out of my own book in my own home. Having been a committed vintage and antiques collector, I've started to check out modern design classics at the *Conran Shop* and loving it! There are some really exciting new designers out there. Keeping an eye on interiors' trends and buying the odd piece or alluding to it can help you look at your home differently and see it with fresh eyes. Use these trends to inspire you. Like having a new haircut or buying a new pair of shoes they can give you such a lift. So enjoy!

Pictures on this page show: Kartell Sled Chair from grahamandgreen.co.uk and Leimu Lamp from innes.co.uk

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Sharlyn Interiors is in its 31st year of trading. From their showroom in Bloxham they have noticed lots of changes in interior fashions during this time.

Gone are the fancy frilly pelmets and curtains, with everything now more streamline and minimalistic. Roman blinds with their clean lines are still a great favourite, with smart interlined hand sewn curtains fitted to dramatic glass or handpainted curtain poles. Colours are still very soft and neutral, but magnolia seems to be a thing of the past!

Palettes of dove greys and taupe tones are now available from all the leading paint, wallpaper and fabric houses.

Sharlyn Interiors have just taken delivery of the new autumn collections of pattern books from leading suppliers such as Clarke & Clarke, Harlequin, Romo and GP & J Bakers as well as many more.

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DOWN ON THE FARM WITH THE BODDINGTON VINTAGE ASSOCIATION

These days, heavy farm equipment comes with air-conditioned cabs, stereo players and GPS satellite navigation. It's interesting to see these super photographs by Roger Cooper of the Boddington Vintage Agricultural Association's annual event that brings back memories of how things used to be. Heavy horses, tractions engines and petrol driven vehicles span the 300 years of agricultural production!

Four Shires October 2013.indd 42 23/09/2013 19:31:18

PICTURES BY ROGER COOPER

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& MEDICINE FOLKLORE

with Maggie Chaplin

THE DAMNED ELUSIVE PIMPERNEL

They seek him here, they seek him there, those Frenchies seek him everywhere...

Those Frenchies were looking for Sir Percy Blakeney, the hero of Baroness Orczy's adventure story set in 1792 during the start of the French Revolution. Sir Percy helped French aristocrats to escape the guillotine by smuggling them to England. He hid his identity and called himself the Scarlet Pimpernel, using a drawing of the little red flower as his emblem. The Baroness's tale caught the imagination and spawned several films, musicals, sequels and parodies.

If you want to find a real scarlet pimpernel, search patches of disturbed ground or by the edge of cornfields – but you'll have to look closely. The pimpernel is a low growing, creeping annual with tiny oval leaves. The bright red star-like flowers are no more than a centimeter across. They appear from spring to early autumn and insects find them attractive, lured it is believed by the vivid purple centre of the flower.

Another name for scarlet pimpernel is poor man's weather glass, because the petals are very sensitive to light and humidity levels. They are rarely fully open before 8am and are closed again by mid afternoon. If the sky becomes overcast and rain threatens this also causes the flowers to close, and a plant that when in full bloom catches the eye with its constellation of scarlet stars, becomes insignificant.

The flowers develop into very unusual seedpods. They are like little round urns that when mature split round the circumference, and the top half lifts up like a lid to allow the hundreds of tiny seeds to be shaken out in the wind. This is very important to the plant as it dies back completely above and below ground in the winter and propagation is entirely by means of seeds. However, because these seeds can survive in the ground for up to ten years, as a weed, pimpernel can be quite difficult to eradicate and its survival seems assured for the foreseeable future.

Scarlet pimpernel has a history of medicinal use dating back at least to the Ancient Greeks, who used it primarily as a cure for melancholia, and its botanical name Angallis derives from the Greek, signifying "to laugh". Even in medieval times in Britain preparations of scarlet pimpernel were prescribed as treatment for insanity.

Lotions made from the juice were said to have powerful cleansing properties and were said to remove skin blemishes, particularly freckles, which were often a serious concern to society ladies in medieval times. Scarlet pimpernel has since been shown to be potentially poisonous when taken internally, and on rare occasions it has been lethal to livestock. It is no longer used in oral medicines, but if your freckles are driving you mad, applying scarlet pimpernel leaves to the affected part might just work. In any case it should at least make you – or your friends – laugh.

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THE 2013 HARVEST HAS BEEN GATHERED

With the rather unpredictable weather of the past farming year, Home Farm can now happily report that the 2013 harvest has been gathered.

COUNTRYMAN

After the nightmare 'white knuckle ride' of the last two farming seasons the 2013 harvest is safely in the barn. Although the 'Green Goddess' languished in her winter quarters until well after last year's finish date, the harvest operation when we did finally get going was non-stop and went without a hitch. After burning a considerable amount of the 'midnight oil' it came to an end on the evening of the 31st of August, and I exchanged the combine driver's platform for a tractor seat.

We still have many long hours of tractor work ahead of us to get next year's cereal crops in the ground. It may be tempting fate, but after last year's incessant deluge and the autumn planting quagmire, we could do with a few days of steady rainfall to settle the dust and get the grass weeds growing so that they can either be sprayed off or cultivated out before next year's seed is put in.

This year's harvest, despite the very late start, was probably one of the easiest for many years. It was non stop from start to finish with very little of the crop needing to go through the grain drier, unlike last year's harvest when everything had to be dried and there was a constant plume of steam billowing out of the barn roof!

Last year's crops were of a very poor quality, although the crop yields were on a par with our five year average.

This year's crop has been a very 'mixed bag'. The winter sown oil seed rape ripened very unevenly and we had a lot of 'shedding' and ended up producing a poor yield and a "messy" sample which had to go through the seed cleaner.

The winter wheat's turned out a lot better than expected, but the highlight of the year were the spring sown crops of oil seed rape, barley and oats. These went in late due to the cold, wet, spring but the 'Cuckoo crops' got off to a good start and performed well all season giving a good yield and a nice clean sample.

The harvest weather produced some interesting sights, with a number of mini whirlwinds or dust devils (an indication of settled weather) twisting across the rows of straw taking it up to a good height before depositing the straw across the hedges and trees anything up to two fields away! Although something of a spectacular sight, they can be very annoying especially when you have just finished rowing up a field of hay.

This year a 'twister' tracked across the middle of a 20 acre field of hay cutting a path some 30 yards wide. It jumped the river and ran out of steam just as it reached the Oxford Canal, dumping its load of well-made hay on a passing canal boat! (I thought it best not to ask for it back).

After the difficult spring, the ewes have had a good summer and we have been able to sell a large number of the lamb crop. The last of the spring born lambs were weaned at the end of August and will soon come inside for finishing. With any luck they will have left the farm before the main flock is brought inside for the winter.

The Cotswolds have also had a very good season with eight ewe lambs being entered into the flock book, (the first to carry the Appletree prefix).

However, the real highlight of the year is 'Apletree Blizzard' a January born ram lamb. Blizzard has been 'brought on' by grandson Ben and his Mother. The pair were taken to some of the local agricultural shows, where they did very well and I had great pride in watching them both take the 'young handler' championship (in Ben's age group) at the national Cotswold sheep show, held at Moreton in the Marsh recently. The lamb will now be allowed to 'grow on' and go back into the show ring next year as a shearling ram, before being sold for breeding.

• *A young Ben with his prize winner*

Our summer visitors have returned south for the winter and despite the best efforts of the doom and gloom merchants, many more swifts, swallows, and house martins started the return journey than arrived in late spring. The very good summer weather has given the insect populations a big lift with many of the so called 'crises species' returning in good numbers.

I am not sure what creature denotes the year 2013 in the Chinese calendar, but 2013 has been the year of the snake at Home Farm. They are perhaps not everyones cup of tea, but we have seen a considerable increase in the numbers of both the adder and grass snake populations on the farm this year. A particularly large female grass snake took up residence under a loose fitting bee hive roof, (the female is larger than the male). It had to be picked up and moved before I could 'work' the hive. It will be interesting to see if she moves in for the winter hibernation.

The adder, although not a rare species, is uncommon and very shy. It is the only native venomous snake in this country. It will 'strike' if disturbed or stepped on, but the venom will not give too much of a problem to humans. It can however, be fatal to both young and elderly dogs, so go equipped with proper clothing on your countryside walks and keep your pet on a lead.

If your pet is taken ill after a county walk, get it to the Vet 'PDQ'.

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IN THE garden

CREATE A BACKYARD WILDLIFE HABITAT

Enhance your backyard, create a fun project for the family and contribute to local wildlife conservation - develop your own Backyard Wildlife Habitat!

Any age can participate, you can go at your own pace and everyone enjoys the lasting benefits. Young children especially can learn the basics of nature appreciation through their own window into the natural world.

A basic understanding of the ways of nature is essential to our commitment towards stewardship of the natural environment.

Develop the Wildlife Habitat:

The four basic needs of your wildlife visitors are: Food, water, cover and nesting. Keep these needs in mind as you plan a backyard wildlife habitat, and consider the following:

Plantings:

• Trees and shrubs are the main elements of any landscaping design and are important for wildlife shelter. Many tree and shrub species are excellent sources of food for wildlife. Select evergreen species for year-round cover and shelter. Select fruit or nut-bearing plants for a food source. Deciduous trees (leaf-dropping) can offer summer shelter for wildlife as well as shade for your home, while allowing light to get through during the darker winter months.

• Plants native to your area will work best. The native plants are adapted to your growing conditions and produce foods and shelter compatible with local wildlife. Select plants that flower and bear fruit at different times of the year.

• Plant in clusters, and multi-level. Have shrubs leading to small trees, alongside larger trees. Wildlife is attracted to multi-storey flora for shelter and forage. Diversity in the landscape is necessary. Some plants provide food but very little cover, others provide cover but little food.

• Plant flowers to provide natural nectar. Tubular red flowers will attract hummingbirds; clusters of brightly coloured flowers attract butterflies. Flowering annuals and perennials bring colour to the garden and can be easily added, or removed, for variety and appearance.

• Plant vegetation around pools, ponds or streams. This provides cover for those creatures attracted to the water. Water sources will also attract more species.

• Leave dead and dying trees, when possible. They attract woodpeckers, owls, wrens and insects for food.

Planting to attract birds:

If you're looking to attract specific bird species to your yard, here are some common plants and trees, and the birds they attract:

• Sunflower - "nature's bird feeder" attracts many birds, such as nuthatches and buntings

• Roses will attract cardinals and sparrows

• Bramble berries (raspberries, blackberries) will bring wrens to your garden

• Elderberries are good for goldfinches

Adding brightly coloured annuals and perennials will attract a host of wildlife to your garden

Four Shires October 2013.indd 46 24/09/2013 09:46:54

• Zinnias, will also bring goldfinches to your garden

• Holly is good for blackbirds and thrushes along with creating much needed cover

• Juniper will bring a host of birds including thrushes and sparrows

• Pines help finches, and robins

• Oaks can supply a good source of food for woodpeckers amongst others

• Spruce is good for sparrows and nuthatch's

• Firs will work well for robins and sparrows

Planting to attract butterflies:

You can attract butterflies with a number of nectar producing plants. Butterflies prefer plants with large petals that provide a perch, though multiple small florets will also attract them. Butterflies are attracted to purple flowers, followed by yellows, pinks and whites.

• The butterfly weed (Asclepias tuberosa) is especially preferred by butterflies.

• Other popular nectar plants include marigold, primrose, sedum, dandelion, coneflower, hollyhock, lantana, goldenrod, aster, yarrow, nasturtium, honeysuckle, viburnum, lilac and zinnia.

• Butterflies prefer the heat, and are most active on sunny, warm days. They need "sunning" sites where they can warm up on cool mornings. Put a light-colored rock or concrete garden sculpture where the morning sun first appears. Butterflies also need a source of water. A shallow dish of water or a depression in a rock that retains water is ideal.

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Butterflies begin their lives as caterpillars, and most caterpillars are leaf-eaters. Don't worry if you see a few caterpillars or damaged leaves, but do target a serious infestation. Use a strong jet of water to wash away aphids or spider mites, and burn any tent caterpillar nests. Avoid using pesticides or herbicides, which can harm beneficial host and food plants and kill bird-attracting insects.

Monitor:

A garden wildlife habitat is a work in progress. You'll find some things that work and others that don't, such as specific plantings you favour or animals you may want to discourage.

Keep a pair of binoculars and a pad with pencil near the best viewing window. Encourage your children to keep a record of sightings and observations. Review this journal with your children and acknowledge their interest and enthusiasm. As you learn from experience, you can "fine tune" your wildlife habitat to encourage the species you most enjoy.

Tips:

Before getting started on your wildlife habitat, check with neighbours and call your local planning department authority to be sure any changes you make to your gardeb are permissable.

Locate birdfeeders and birdbaths near cover. Birds need escape routes, especially from cats. Overhanging branches from nearby trees are ideal. Feeders should be at least six - seven feet off the ground, and several feet from any tree trunks to discourage squirrels.

Before setting out feeders or nesting houses, find out which species are common in your area and can be encouraged to nest in your yard. Make or buy a bird house specifically designed for the bird

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you wish to attract. The size of the entrance hole is critical to prevent the eggs and young from being destroyed by larger birds--always check a list of appropriate hole sizes.

Fruit-bearing shrubs and trees will attract birds. Locate where dropped fruit will not be a bother to your use of the garden.

Pests: Discourage pests by covering window wells and patching holes around the house foundation. Cedar lattice under the deck will keep pests out from under. Keep garbage and compost pile secure from pests. Squirrels can be deterred from taking over your birdfeeders by setting out food for them away from the feeders - they will mark that area as their own, and be less interested in the birdfeeder.

Water: With birdbaths and small ponds, keep the water moving if possible, especially in a freeze. Set out a dish of water by the feeder during an icy day.

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Enhance open it doors in Banbury
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The Hollybush in Priors Marston gets a new look
EDUCATION
A look at schools in the Four Shires
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CELEBRATING SUCCESS AT SIBFORD SCHOOL

Sibford School celebrated the success of its GCSE and A Level students with a special awards night held at the Mill Theatre in Banbury last month.

The guest speaker was scientist, writer, broadcaster and member of the House of Lords, Susan Greenfield.

Susan, who is Professor of Pharmacology at Oxford University, told students: "Each one of you is a unique and special person ... and that uniqueness is down to your brain.

"There never has been and never will be a brain the same as yours. The environment you are in is so important to the development of the brain, which is why this school has been such an excellent place for you to be. However, now is the time to start taking your life into your hands and to be you. Don't be frightened to be you."

Michael Goodwin, head of Sibford School said: "Our celebration evening was a lovely event and we are grateful to Susan Greenfield for agreeing to be our guest speaker."

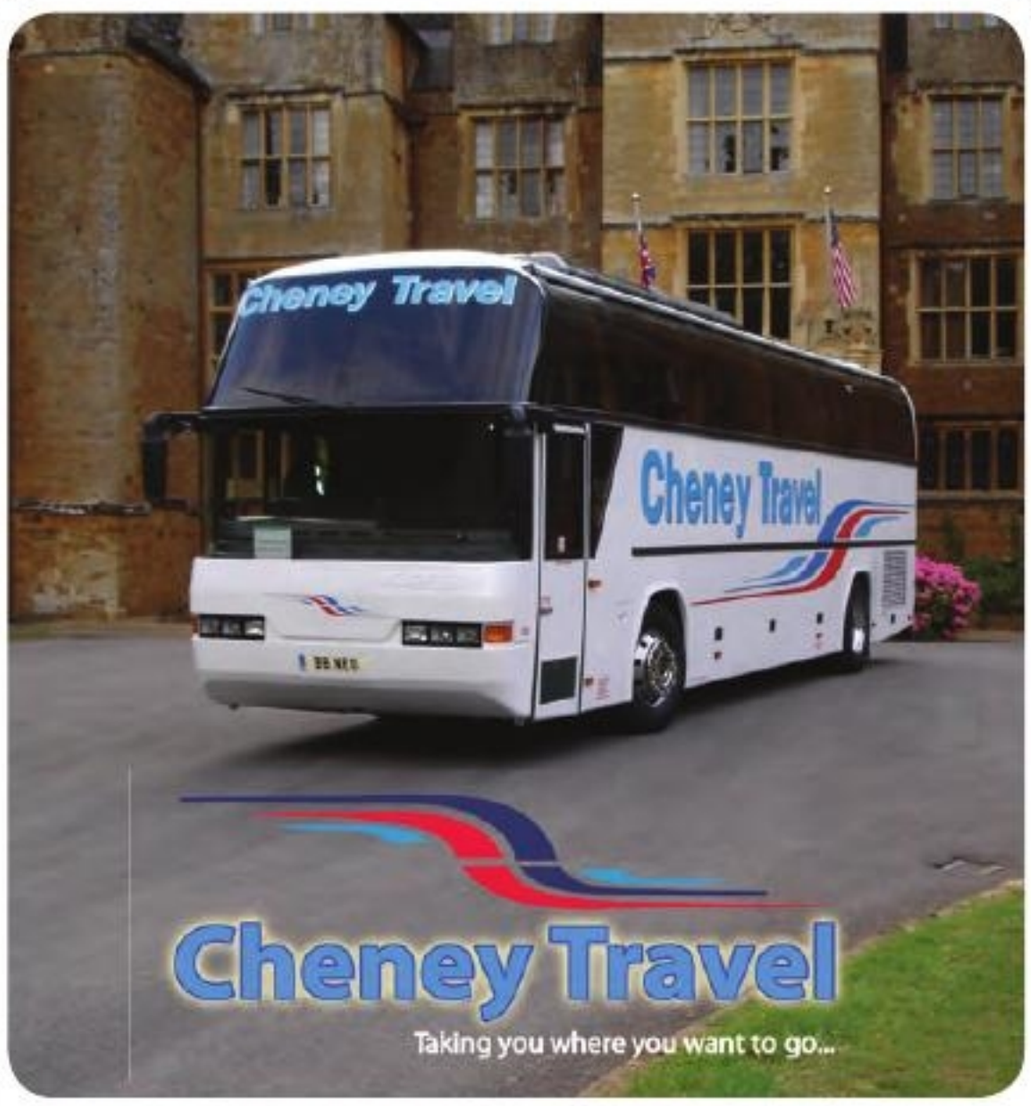
Sibford School are also celbrating the success of pupil Will Homewood who is through the regional finals of *Open Mic*, the national music competition for singers in the UK.

The 13-year-old singer/songwriter will appear on stage at the NEC on October 5, and is keeping his fingers crossed that his performance will see him through to the semi finals.

The competition attracts over 9,000 acts every year as it travels across the country in search for the UK's best singers, singer/songwriters, rappers and vocalists.

Will, who lives in Horley, said: "I'm really looking forward to the regional finals and performing in front of a crowd at the NEC. Sibford School has been great in helping me with my music, as has *Unison Rock Academy*. But I'd also like to say a big thank you to my mum ... I really couldn't do this without her."

Pictures show: Susan Greenfield and Will Homewood (Photo courtesy of Mark Green, In Memory Photography).



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Sibford School

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Sixth Form Open Evening
Tuesday 15 October from 6.30pm

Prospective pupils and their parents are invited to join us to learn more about life in Sibford Sixth Form and to discuss AS and A Level options.

Sibford Ferris, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX15 5QL
Telephone: 01295 781200/781203

www.sibfordschool.co.uk

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Four Shires

WINE AND DINE

GOOD BEER GUIDE 2014 RELEASED AND *FOUR SHIRES* PUBS FEATURE HIGHLY

CAMRA's Good beer Guide for 2014 has just been published and we are happy to say that quite a few of our *Four Shires'* pubs feature in the voluminous guide.

Going alphabetically, the Pickled Ploughman (formerly The Plough) at Adderbury gets a mention: 'following a tasteful and extensive refurbishment in 2012, this free house has built a reputation not only for its extensive menu…but also for its four well kept ales…'

The Butcher's Arms at Balscote is a 'cosy parlour pub' – read more about its relaunch elsewhere in this month's Four Shires.

In Banbury, The Bell Inn on the Middleton Road, The Mill Arts Centre and The White Horse (formerly The Buck and Bell) get mentioned and in Barford St Michael, The George is featured as a 'charming thatched free house dating from 1672'.

In Bicester The Penny Black makes it in and Bloxham's Elephant and Castle 'that seems to face the wrong way' is a regular insertion.

Chadlington and Charlbury are served by The Tite Inn and The Rose and Crown respectively with The Crown at Enstone (a favourite of our old picture framer) featuring.

Chacombe's George and Dragon, 'a stone built pub in front of the village green' is listed and Clifton's Duke of Cumberland's Head is seeing some famous guests at the moment.

In Deddington The Crown and Tuns pudding centred inn is reported on.

Drayton's Roebuck and Lower Heyford's Bell Inn are featured and famously, the Nut Tree at Murcott – a 'Michelin Starred' pub!

Greatworth's Inn is 'an enthusiastically run hosteAlry' and The Crewe Arms at Hinton in the Hedges has a 'traditional bar, loung and relaxing snug (CAMRA members receive a 10% discount on accommodation).

Oxford has its fair share of entries, perhaps the pick being The Lamb and Flag in St Giles – a surprising omission is The Eagle and Child?

Shutford's George and Dragon is a 'popular free house, nestling in a hillside by the church' Souldern's Fox features drinks from local micro breweries.

Shipston on Stour's sole entry is the Black Horse: 'an ancient stone built 16th Century pub, the oldest inn and only thatched building in Shipston. It has a license dating back to 1540'

At Upper Heyford 'a warm welcome is assured at this community focused local' – The Barley Mow, and in Wroxton, The White Horse's prominent position on the Stratford to Warwick Road is remarked upon.

Whichford's Norman Knight makes the guide, where the regular motoring based meetings are remarked upon.

so much more than just a guide however, the Good Beer Guide has sections featuring breweries, how beer is made and other ale related features. The guide is always worth investigating.

CAMRA's Good Beer Guide £15.99 paperback 944 pages ISBN 978-1-85249-312-7

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MARCO PIERRE WHITE

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PRIX FIXE TWO COURSE LUNCH MENU
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MAINBOARDS

Wheeler's 8 oz prime Scotch beef burger
BBQ, bacon, Monterey jack cheese, pomme frites

The Butchers 8oz steak with sauce Béarnaise
Roasted vine tomatoes, pomme frites

Grilled Cumberland sausages and creamed potatoes
Buttered garden peas, rich onion gravy

Grilled 10oz pork chop with sage
Roasted vine tomatoes, pomme frites, sauce *Béarnaise*

Escalope of chicken *Holstein*
Fried egg, capers, anchovy, pomme frites

The Governor's fried haddock
Triple cooked chips, marrowfat peas, sauce tartare

Grilled pink trout á la *Grenobloise*
Lemon, caper, brown shrimp's, parsley

ENGLISH PUDDINGS

Poached pear belle Hélène
Sauce chocolate

Mr White's rice pudding

Cambridge burnt cream

THIS MENU IS ALSO AVAILABLE 6PM – 9.30PM
Sunday to Thursday £16.50
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Pomme frites
Creamed potatoes

A LA CARTE MENU
(subject to seasonal changes)

STARTERS

Roasted vine tomato soup £5.95
Croutons

Warm baked *St.Marcellin* £7.95
Roast vine tomatoes, toasted sourdough

Fried duck egg and *Stornoway* black pudding £7.95
En brioche, Merlot vinegar

Brandade of fine quality smoked mackerel £7.95
Fresh horseradish, toast *Melba*

Wheeler's classic prawn cocktail £9.50
Sauce *Marie Rose*

Potted duck with green peppercorns £7.75
Cornichons, toasted sourdough

MAINBOARDS

Grilled calf's liver, bacon and onion gravy £14.50
Creamed potatoes, buttered garden peas

Kedgeree of smoked haddock à l`Indienne £14.50
Gardens peas, micro coriander

Finest quality 8oz rib eye of Scottish beef £24.50
Triple cooked chips, sauce *Béarnaise*

Finest quality fillet of sea bream £16.50
Buttered new potatoes, sauce vierge

Honey roast belly of pork Marco Polo £17.50
Butter beans, honey spice, roasting juices

Roast rump of lamb á la Dijonnaise £22.50
Dauphinoise potatoes, roasting juices

ENGLISH PUDDINGS ALL £5.50

Poached peach belle Hélène
Sauce raspberry

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Banana and caramel

Sticky toffee pudding
Vanilla ice cream, toffee sauce

The Black Boy Inn, Milton, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX15 4HH
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A TASTE OF LINGUINE FROM THE HORSE AND GROOM IN MILCOMBE

Hello my name is Jim and my wife (Taryn) and I bought the Horse & Groom, situated in the village of Milcombe, just ten minutes from Banbury and Chipping Norton in July 2011. We undertook a major refurbishment and re-opened a few weeks later.

We run the pub with Taryn's parents (Annette & David). They manage the bar, dining room and accommodation and I manage the kitchen. We aim to provide top quality pub food with great service to match. We place great emphasis on using fresh seasonal produce and we use small local suppliers for the majority of our purchases.

I am a self-taught chef – for the previous 20 years I have worked in various sales and management roles – latterly for Kraft Foods. I was made redundant in 2008 and decided on a complete change of career!

Please find a recipe, which we have had much success with recently.

Linguine with Seared Scallops, Peas and Bacon (serves 4)

We first served this recipe just a few weeks ago at our Bank Holiday Seafood and Music Festival and it was one of the most popular dishes we have ever produced so it will be appearing regularly back on the menu over the coming months. It's very simple to make and just takes as long to cook as the pasta. You can use a different pasta to Linguine if you prefer and you could also substitute chorizo for the bacon.

Ingredients:

- 400g Linguine pasta
- 400g Scallops (We use small Queenie scallops)
- Two tablespoons olive oil
- 100g bacon (We use smoked streaky)
- 200g frozen peas
- Chopped parsley
- One Lemon
- One tablespoon butter
- Salt and pepper

Method:

Put a pan of salted water on to boil. When the water is boiling, add the linguine and stir. Cook until the pasta is al dente (around nine minutes). Remember to reserve a little of the cooking liquor.

Zest the lemon and cut lemon in half.

Meanwhile rinse and dry the scallops and set aside. Heat a large frying pan over a medium heat. Add one tblsp olive oil and fry the bacon for around five minutes to release the fat.

Add the scallops to the pan and sear them for about one minute on each side (may need longer if using larger scallops). Add the peas, squeeze lemon juice into the pan and add lemon zest.

Add cooked linguine to the pan and toss with the scallops, peas and bacon. Add a small knob of butter and a little of the pasta cooking liquor – this will make a sauce to coat the pasta.

Put the finished dish into a large serving bowl and sprinkle with the chopped parsley.

HORSE & GROOM
Milcombe

- **Monday Nights** – Two home-made 8oz beef burgers with hand-cut chips, slaw & pickles for the price of one – that's £9.95 for two!
- **Wednesday Steak Nights** – A selection of Mr. Beadle's prime cuts at discounted prices with complimentary choice of sauces.
- **Thursday Curry Night** – Re-starting in October. A choice of two home-made curries served with Poppadums, Pickles, Basmati Rice & Naan Bread for just £10.
- **Fish Fridays** – Come and try a selection of lovely fresh fish dishes every Friday lunch & evening.
- **Sundays** – finish the weekend off with a traditional family Sunday lunch – see below for details of a special offer for *Four Shires* readers.

Come and try our Lovely Roast Sunday Lunches

We serve Sunday lunches from 12 noon to 3pm – the menu changes weekly. There's always a choice of 5 starters; 3 Roast Meats; 2 Vegetarian Dishes and a Fish Dish plus 5 home-made puddings.

Special Offer for *Four Shires* readers: Come and try our fabulous freshly cooked Sunday lunch and get a complimentary bottle of one of our House Selection wines when you book a table for Sunday lunch for 4 or more people during October & November 2013. Please mention 'Four Shires Sunday Lunch offer' when booking your table and bring this voucher with you. (Not to be used in conjunction with other offers).

The Horse and Groom Inn @ Milcombe
Nr Banbury, Oxon OX15 4RS
01295 722142
www.thehorseandgroominn.co.uk

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wine OF THE month

S H Jones - 01295 251179

Pehhcora Pecorino 2012, IGT Terre di Chieti, Abruzzo, Italy

The Terre di Chiete IGT (Indicazione Geografica Tipica) is a broad wine region in Abruzzo, Central Italy. It was created in 1995 after the emergence of the IGT category of wines in 1992. Under the auspices of the IGT designation, winemakers have more flexibility with their viticulture and vinification practices than they do with DOC or DOCG (Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita) wines.

Approximately 60% of the white grapes grown in this region is the Pecorino grape, an indigenous white variety, unrelated to the cheese of that name! Pecora means sheep and the sheep apparently like to eat this vine.

It was thought that the Pecorino grape had disappeared until the late 1970s, but then some vines were discovered in a gorge in the Marche region and thus began to make an appearance again in this and the Abruzzo region.

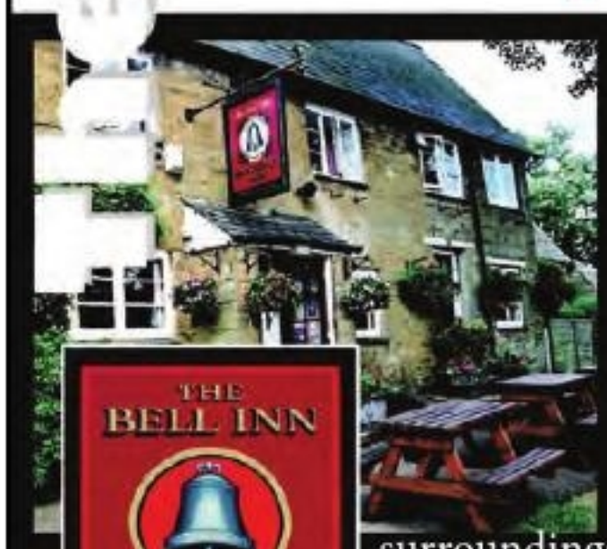
The grapes are grown at 130 metres above sea level on limestone–clay soil. In the winery they are gently crushed and then the juice is fermented in stainless steel. The wine is rested for six months and is then aged for a further six months in bottle before being released.

On the palate there are tasty, mouth-watering stone fruit flavours and notes of pear and hazelnut. The wine is crisp and fresh, a touch minerally, and has a nice long finish. It is a unique style, rather like Picpoul de Pinet, and well worth trying. It makes a particularly good accompaniment to pasta, white meat and shellfish dishes. Enjoy to 2015.

Pehhcora Pecorino 2012 retails at £8.99. Mention *Four Shires* and receive 10% discount.

The Bell

Shenington, Nr Banbury
Oxfordshire, OX15 6NQ
Tel: 01295 670274
www.thebellshenington.co.uk
email: thebellshenington@gmail.com



At The Bell we do not do gimmicks or offers. We aim for good value, home-cooked food using local fresh produce served in warm, comfortable, unpretentious surroundings. We are unashamedly an 'old fashioned' village Inn. Gluten free and vegetarian dishes are always available.

SUNDAY ROAST £8:95

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menu OF THE month

This month we offer a menu suitable for a cold Halloween night

TO START...

CREAMY FENLAND CELERY SOUP WITH STILTON CHEESE (serves 4)

(Courtesy of www.fenlandcelery.com)

YOU'LL NEED:

- One oz butter or margarine
- One small or ½ medium celeriac, chopped
- One large leek, chopped
- Two cloves garlic, chopped
- One whole head of fresh Celery with leaves, chopped (reserve some leaf for garnishing)
- 850 ml vegetable or chicken stock
- 150 ml milk
- 75g Stilton cheese
- Salt and pepper

For the croutons:

- One small white loaf (one day old), cut into small cubes
- Two tbsp olive oil
- 50g Cheddar, grated

METHOD:

Melt the butter or margarine and add the celeriac. Stir and then sweat for three - four minutes. Add the leek and garlic and cook for a further three - four minutes and then add the chopped celery and stock. Gently simmer with the lid on for 15 minutes or until the celery is just soft. Remove from the heat and leave to cool.

Liquidize and then sieve if a smoother texture is desired. Stir in the milk and cheese and reheat until the cheese has dissolved, taking care not to let it boil.

Garnish with croutons and ½ tsp finely chopped celery leaf. If preferred the cheese can be omitted from the soup and garnished instead with the cheesy croutons for a less intense flavour.

Cheesy croutons: Mix the bread cubes, olive oil and grated cheese in a bowl. Scatter onto a baking tray and cook for 20 minutes at 180°C/350°F/Gas 5. Cook for another 10 minutes if not golden brown. Cool and store in an airtight container for up to a week.

TO FOLLOW...

SAUSAGE, SHALLOT AND LENTIL CASSEROLE WITH GINGER AND PARSLEY

(Courtesy of www.UKshallot.com)

YOU'LL NEED:

- Olive oil
- eight good quality pork and leek sausages
- 400g whole small shallots
- 30g ginger finely chopped
- One carrot finely chopped
- One sprig of fresh thyme
- Two - three bay leaves
- ½ bottle of red wine
- One litre good chicken stock
- 200g lentil de Puy
- 30g parsley

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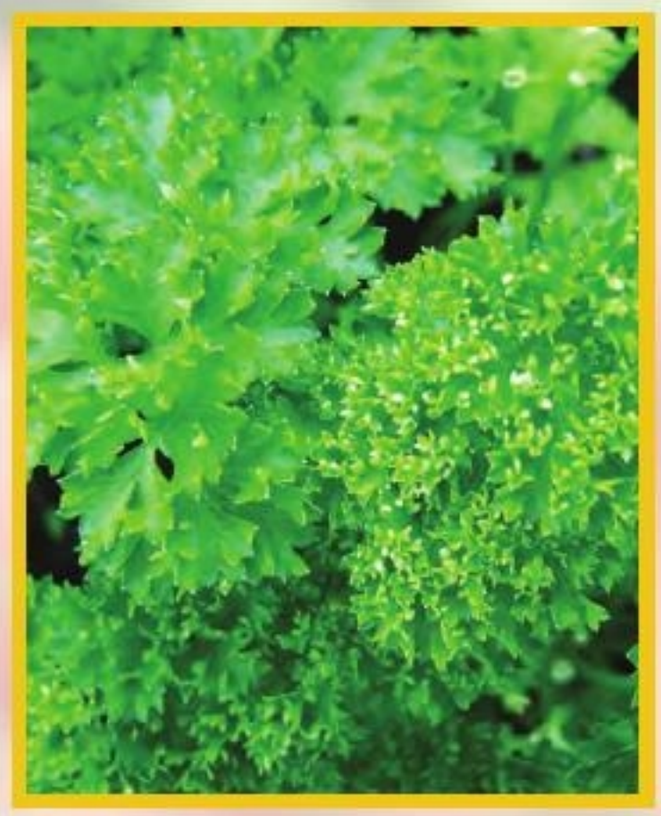
METHOD:

In a large metal casserole dish add a splash of olive oil and seal off the sausages so that they are browned off all over, remove from the pan and place on to a plate until later on when required.

Wipe out the pan the sausages were in and add another splash of oil, then add in the whole peeled shallots, finely diced ginger and carrot and cook for a minute.



Now add the sprig of thyme, bay leaves and the wine, bring to the boil and reduce the liquid by three quarters.

When the liquid has reduced add the stock and bring back to the boil. Once boiled add in the lentils and cook on the top of the stove for 5 minutes.

Add the sausages back to the pan and place the whole pan into a hot oven at 180°c for 20 minutes.

After this time remove the pan from the oven and add the chopped parsley.

The sauce should be at the right consistency and the lentils cooked through, but if the sauce is too thin simply place back on the stove and reduce slightly until the right consistency has been achieved, it should coat the back of a spoon.

Place the lentils and shallots on hot plates then place the sausages on top, pouring over the sauce and finishing with a sprig of parsley.

Serve with broccoli and creamy mash potatoes.

TO FINISH...

BAKED & SPICED PINK LADY APPLES WITH PINK PEPPERCORNS

YOU'LL NEED:

- Four pink lady apples, unpeeled
- 100g currants
- 50g dried cranberries
- 1tbsp pink peppercorns
- 50g soft brown sugar
- 50g mixed candied peel
- 50ml Cointreau
- 100ml white wine, apple juice or water

METHOD:

Heat the oven to 190°C/ Gas 5. Pour boiling water over the currants, cranberries and pink peppercorns to just cover, and leave to soak for 10 minutes.

Mix the brown sugar and mixed candied peel together with the Cointreau.

Drain the currants and add to the sugar mixture, stirring well.

Core the apples and use the tip of a sharp knife to cut around the diameter of each apple to prevent the skins from bursting.

Place in an ovenproof dish, and fill each one to overflowing with the fruit mixture.

Add the wine, water or juice to the dish and bake for 35 minutes or until tender.

When serving, drizzle with the sweet juices left behind, making sure a few pink peppercorns are visible on top.

Wines to complement

SH Jones of Banbury recommends these delicious wines to complement our Menu of the Month:

STARTER: CREAMY CELERY SOUP WITH STILTON CHEESE

Jerez, Spain: Williams & Humbert Dry Sack Fino Sherry. Soup is not always an easy thing to match with wine. A full flavoured wine, where only a sip is needed to cut through the richness of the dish to refresh the palate, is what is required here. A dry fino sherry, served chilled, does the trick perfectly. £9.49 for 75cl bottle.

MAIN: SAUSAGE, SHALLOT AND LENTIL CASSEROLE

Languedoc, France: Chateau Drolou Corbières 2010. This spicy, dark fruited and concentrated wine, from the Languedoc region in southern France, is made from the traditional Syrah, Grenache and Carignan grapes. At £7.99 it is excellent value for money and is a good match for this hearty casserole. £7.99 for 75cl bottle.

DESSERT: BAKED AND SPICED APPLES WITH PEPPERCORNS

Madeira, Portugal: Barbeito Madeira, Malvasia Reserva. Flavours of brown sugar, gentle spiciness, dried fruits (figs, raisins) and nuts make this delicious fortified wine the perfect accompaniment to the baked apples. £12.49 for 50cl bottle.

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HAIL THE SEASON OF THE BLACKBERRY

Hi to all at *Four Shires* readers. I hope you are all well and have enjoyed the great summer we have had. Things have been really busy here at the Wykham. We have been able to use our patio for the first time in a long while. It has been nice to see people walking about with their heads up and a smile on their faces. Sadly though, all good things come to an end!

Still there are a few things to look forward to in the food world as we turn the corner into autumn, like the great British blackberry. Just think of that first freshly baked pie with fresh cream or a classic thick custard poured all over it (heaven, absolute heaven!). The blackberry seasons spans from the end of summer to the beginning of autumn and they have grown across the cooler regions of the world for thousands of years. Archaeological records show that European inhabitants ate them as long ago as 8,000BC (nearly as old as my mum's homemade Jam!)

They are packed with antioxidants, vitamin c and ellagic acid which may provide protection against crohn's disease, so they must be good for us. They are more highly prized as a food in Britain and Northen Europe than anywhere else in the world.

Always try and get wild blackberries if you can, they have a depth of flavour that culitvated ones do not. Search out the brambles if you're out walking, look for plump darkly colured fruits that are not too firm or too soft. Avoid roadsides and polluted spots as the berries will not taste too good.

THE RECIPE: BLACKBERRY CLAFOUTS

This is a nice, easy recipe that can be eaten hot or cold. It serves about eight people.

Ingredients:

- 2lb fresh blackberries (washed)
- Eight medium eggs
- 10oz castor sugar
- 5oz plain flour
- 7oz unsalted butter (softened)
- Half tsp baking powder

You will need a 12x10x2inch baking tin lightly greased with butter

Method:

Pre heat the oven to 200°c, 180 fan oven,400°f, or gas 6.

Mix the sponge ingredients in a bowl. Beat the eggs first then stir in the sugar, flour & butter then thoroughly beat in the baking powder.

Pour the mix into the greased tin then add the blackberries and bake for about 30 mins until the centre of the cake is firm and not runny.

Sprinkle with a little more sugar and enjoy.

I do hope that you get the time to try this recipe, it is really easy, cheap, healthy and best of all, it is 'proper' comfort food.

Thanks for taking the time to read this and pop in to the Wykham. We've just put a pulled pork dish and also a wild boar ragout with homemade gnocchi on to our menu and boy are they good!

Cheers Damian.

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SIBFORD GOWER
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Four Shires October 2013.indd 58 24/09/2013 09:26:17

A FEATHER LIGHT LUNCH AT THE FUZZY DUCK

If, like me, toiletries 'accidentally' fall into your wash bag on checking out of your hotel room; the odds are Baylis and Harding - one of the leading brands in that field, will have supplied them.

But what we have in the Warwickshire hamlet of Armscote is quite the reverse; Baylis and Harding are the people behind this boutique hotel and restaurant.

I have known 'The Fuzzy Duck', in its various incarnations over the past 40 years and it was difficult to believe I was in the same place. Indeed so stunning is the transformation I had to return to my car to check from the map and make sure I was in the right place!

The new restaurant project came about when the local village pub in Armscote was boarded up. Brother and sister Tania Fossey and Adrian Slater live in the village and decided to do something about it.

Tania comments, "It's a great shame that so many rural communities have no centre - so when the pub came up for sale we decided to do something about it and put something back into the community. Our vision was a small but perfectly formed boutique B&B and country eatery which would not only be a lovely place for locals but would also establish the little hamlet on the gourmet map too."

I was met by the manager, Martin Deveraux, who gave me a brief tour of the inn. The four bedrooms, all named after ducks, some of which can be found on the nearby village pond, reek of luxury. From the large, comfortable beds, the 'Frette' linen, towels and bathrobes and as you would expect enough Baylis and Harding toiletries to start a shop.

Martin is very proud of The Fuzzy Duck, and rightly so.

It's the little touches that impress.

The neat line of 'Hunter' wellies for those guests that wish to explore the Warwickshire countryside; the cleverly designed separate entrance to the bedrooms for those late returning visitors.

The bar and dining areas are as sumptuous as the rest of the hotel. My favourite is "The Garage" named after its former use and decorated with some terrific black and white iconic motor racing photographs. On a nice day however, I would no doubt be out in the garden or the outside eating area.

But, you know me. The main reason I am here is for the food.

Chef Richard Craven has worked in this area for some time. Apart from a couple of years in South Africa, he has a passion for working for some of the best food producers in the country and is excited by the fact that many of them are on the doorstop, enabling him and his team to produce amazing, tasty, seasonal food.

He does confess however to enjoying egg and cress sandwiches from garage forecourt shops!

My meal started with a little amuse bouche of a scotch quail's egg or should that be a quail scotch egg?

Either way, it was delicious. This was followed by a whole, fresh, baked loaf with a pat of excellent butter from Ross on Wye.

My starter was individual duck and crayfish ravioli which was light as a feather - a duck's feather presumably?

I am a fish man, always have been, always will be.

No choice of course as I am named after the world's greatest fisherman, so the main of Dover Sole, one of the great fish, was right up my street. Together with seasonal vegetables, it was perfect.

I had a chat with chef Richard who was equally excited about being able to offer Dover Sole on the menu as its price often makes this difficult.

I passed on dessert, but having enjoyed a couple of glasses of thirst quenching Pinot Grigio I just had a single espresso which was the perfect finish to an excellent lunch.

So there we are: The Fuzzy Duck. It has a great future and I can see it becoming a firm favourite on the local eating scene whether you go for lunch or dinner or if you want to make it a really special visit with an overnight stay as well.

The Fuzzy Duck, Ilmington Road, Armscote, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwicks. 01608 682635

Four Shires October 2013.indd 59 24/09/2013 09:50:38

NEW MENU LAUNCHED AT THE BUTCHERS ARMS IN BALSCOTE

A 'Trencher' (from the old French tranchier, to cut) is a type of tableware commonly used in the middle ages. A trencher was originally a piece of bread cut in to a square shape and used as a plate. Food was then placed on the bread before being eaten. At the end of the meal, the trencher, having absorbed a lot of the sauce could be eaten. However, in the middle ages, it was often saved and given as 'alms' to the poor!

Now, Ken and Eileen at The Butchers Arms have brought the idea into the 21st century. Using artisan bakers, and local meat from Steve Betts, there is a super range of trenchers to be tried at the inn.

Choose from The Great British (beef and 'hooky' ale stew and vegetables) – to the more exotic Moroccan (v) – beans and roasted vegetable tagine in a 'Ras el Hanout' and caraway seed infused trencher.

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Pictures by *Four Shires* Jeremy Wilton

Pictures show: 1: Lauren Makin, Ken and Eileen Thompson and Sam Bridge 2: Robin Russell, Will Hutchins and Duncan Collins 3: Liz Smith and Ang Biscomb 4: View of the Trencher 5: Pam Walton and Rose Hancock 6: Les Biscomb and Barrie Smith 7: Katie Garbien and Monika Zabinska – bakers of the Trencher 'artisan bread' 8: George Hancock and Brian Ailsby 9: The band 'Swing Three' entertains diners at The Butchers Arms in Balscote and 10: Martin and Liz Whitworth

Four Shires October 2013.indd 60 24/09/2013 08:36:13

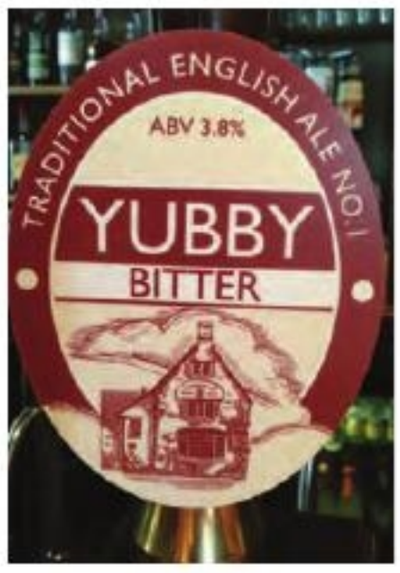
AWARD-WINNING PUB BREWS OWN BEER

Claire and Jim Alexander, owners of award-winning Cotswold pub, The Ebrington Arms, near Chipping Campden, and The Killingworth Castle in Wootton, near Woodstock, have fulfilled a lifelong ambition with the brewing of their own beer; *Yubby Bitter*.

Named after Ebrington's old village name, "Yubberton", and the long-standing nickname for The Ebrington Arms, "the Yubby", Yubby Bitter is available (alongside five other independent ales) at The Ebrington Arms and The Killingworth Castle in Wootton by Woodstock, Oxfordshire.

Having been awarded CAMRA North Cotswold Pub of the Year three times in a row and twice runner up over the last seven years, the team at The Ebrington Arms have developed a rather discerning palate. Keen to try their hand at developing their own real ale, Jim and Claire enlisted the services of a local expert, 'Food Scientist' Dr. Julian South, who lectures on brewing technology at Campden BRI and, like Jim and Claire, a keen CAMRA member (Campaign for Real Ale). Yubby Bitter is already receiving rave reviews from locals, tourists and ale enthusiasts alike.

Jim had a clear idea of how the beer should taste – somewhere between his favourite pint, London Pride and Flowers (that used to be popular in the area but hadn't been brewed for a long time). With a desire to use British ingredients in the recipe, as the pub kitchen does with its food menu, the pair decided on all British malts and hops as the ideal formula and the result is a copper ale with floral nose and bitter finish (3.8% abv). Jim commented; "We're going back to how it used to be when pubs brewed their own beer. Lots are doing it already but I knew exactly what taste I was after so we've come up with a very traditional English bitter. It's a bit of a dream come true to be honest."



The ambition has come in part due to lifelong ambition, as well as a nod to the current trend of microbreweries selling out to big supermarkets keen to jump on the 'local' bandwagon. Having bagged a space in the brew schedule at the North Cotswold Brewery in Shipston, the project was off to a good start.

It wasn't all smooth sailing; as with every child at Christmas, excitement after the first brew was running high and the team cracked into the first barrel a bit early. Having now perfected the recipe, locals and visitors are flocking back for more and future plans could see the pair create their own brewery; which they have space for at their newest pub, The Killingworth Castle.

The couple hope that the local ale will add to the pubs' charm; cementing their reputation for serving homemade produce. The pubs' food is all made on site; from ice cream and bread to sausages and herbs grown in the garden.

Based at Eydon near Daventry, The Royal Oak @ Eydon is a pub going places.

As well as being under new management, we are proud to introduce our new Head Chef, **David Benson** (pictured left). Trained at Rugby College, David is a local boy who has spent 15 years in the trade, including periods at The Butchers' Arms and Fawsley Hall.

David's true passion is 'Gastro Food' and his time at The Duck on the Pond, which won Gastro Pub of the Year twice during his employ, cemented his desire to serve high quality, affordable meals.

His new 'Rustic - Gastro' menu for the Royal Oak focuses on high quality, locally sourced produce set to adapt in-line with the seasons.

A Beer Token scheme ensures a steady supply of fresh, seasonal vegetables from local gardeners and allotment holders, which David is passionate about incorporating into his menu.

Bex has been at the helm of the Royal Oak since March, and has worked hard to ensure that the pub remains a vibrant hub in the small and close-knit community of Eydon. With a background in fashion retail and customer service, her goal is to provide every customer with the same warm, welcoming experience whether they are dining or propping up the bar!

Set in the heart of the beautiful village of Eydon and surrounded by the idyllic South Northamptonshire countryside, the 16th Century ironstone building is a beautiful spot for a countryside lunch or a romantic dinner. Four cosy dining rooms are ideally adaptable for both intimate dinners for two and large celebratory parties, and the separate bar area that runs through the centre of the pub is usually packed with friendly locals enjoying some of the four Cask Marque certified real ales.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Royal Oak very soon!

Bex, David and the Team

THE ROYAL OAK
@Eydon

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www.theroyaloakateydon.co.uk

Four Shires October 2013.indd 61 24/09/2013 08:07:04

RALPH LAUREN OPENS NEW STORE IN BICESTER

From timeless and sophisticated essentials to contemporary silhouettes with a sleek, modern sensibility, Polo Ralph Lauren Women combines the best of feminine heritage with contemporary trends.

A gala opening at Bicester village welcomed guests to the new store recently.

Amongst those attending were the mayor of Bicester Melanie Maghee and Ralph Lauren senior vice president Europe, Jeremy Taylor.

Pictures by Jeremy Wilton show: 1: Jeremy Taylor, Senior Vice President Europe, Ralph Lauren 2: Sarah Ward Hendry, Zoe, Michael Ward Hendry and Clare from Ralph Lauren 3: Jeana Cassidy, Deana Barbour and Mirandha Markham 4: Anita de Haas, Mandy Marks, Sally Sheppey and Tracy Anne-Holmes 5: David Maghee, Bicester mayor Melanie Maghee and Danni Maghee 6: Patricia Iannucci and Lucy Godfrey 7: Alex Torres and Chelsea Veale 8: Edward and Henry Reily-Collins 9: Jayne Buxton and Joeley Buxton-Smith 10: Melanie Pejkovic, Binnie Reily Collins and Teulah Bradshaw

Four Shires October 2013.indd 62 23/09/2013 13:39:17

PREPARE YOUR SKIN FOR AUTUMN

Now that we are in October, the change in temperature and humidity affects human skin than more than anything else. Skin, being the exposed organ has to cope with these changes and hence needs extra attention and care. Besides revolving the wardrobe, you have to take several other steps to protect your skin from the colder months.

Keep your skin hydrated:

In most cases, skin undergoes severe dehydration during autumn. The environment becomes dry and the skin becomes irritated. Sun heats up the atmosphere and sebaceous glands seem to reduce normal secretion. As a result, skin cells suffer from under nourishment and there is immature destruction of the dehydrated skin cells. In this condition, you have to focus on re-hydrating the skin cells. Try to drink plenty of water and fruits to restore normal hydration level. Make sure, you include more leafy and juicy vegetables in your meals.

Nourish and moisturize your skin:

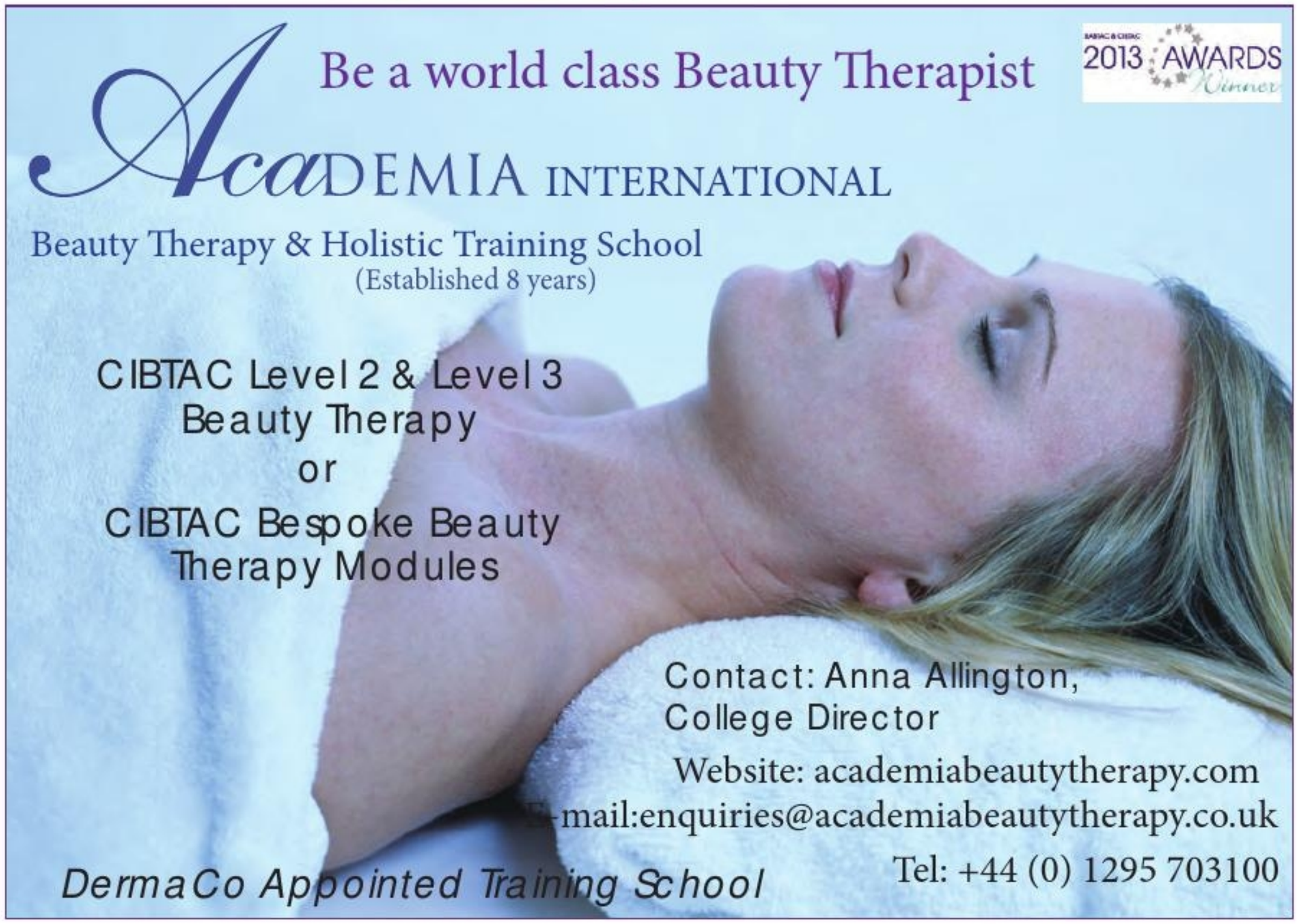
Another important method for preparing skin for the autumn is to nourish and moisturize. You can apply moisturizers and skin care creams throughout the year, but during autumn, you should try and maintain a routine. This way, you can monitor skin health regularly and pay extra attention when needed. You should do some research while purchasing a moisturizer. Explore the ingredients and some reviews from the users to learn about the effects, both good and bad.

Protect, exfoliate and repair:

Several skin exfoliating products available in the market can help you protect and repair the skin cells from the environment. Make sure these skin repair products have special ingredients that facilitate exfoliation such as glycolic and salicylic acid. These ingredients will help the skin look fresher and smoother. In most cases, skin starts appearing dull and loses the natural glow. If you want to retain the natural look, you should concentrate on exfoliation and repair more than anything else.

Opt for a skin-nourishing diet:

Finally you have to focus on the lifestyle and dietary factors. Skin needs proper rests and dietary nourishment to prevent unwanted makeovers in the hostile atmosphere. You should include fruits, green leafy vegetables and plenty of liquids in your diets.



Four Shires October 2013.indd 63 24/09/2013 08:38:35

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF YOU HAVE A HEARING LOSS?

Did you know that one in six people in the UK have some level of hearing loss? That's ten million people – so if you feel your hearing is not what it once was, you are not alone.

If you experience any of the following, you may have hearing loss.

Do:

• Others seem to mumble rather than speak clearly?

• You have difficulty understanding when there is background noise in restaurants?

• You find it hard to keep up with conversations when talking to a group of people?

• You find it tiring to listen to conversations because you have to concentrate hard?

• Others think your television or radio is too loud but you cannot hear it properly if they turn it down?

• You often have difficulty hearing on the telephone?

What you should do if you are losing your hearing?

Acknowledging that you might have hearing loss and accepting that you may need to take action is an important step, but to find out for sure you need to have your hearing tested. Your hearing will then be assessed before the audiologist decides

if you would benefit from hearing aids. Remember, if your hearing is normal the audiologist will tell you. If your hearing loss is very small you may not need hearing aids at this stage, and some simple practical adjustments may be all you need. However, if you do need hearing aids, here are two good reasons to take action as early as possible:

• Although the help hearing aids give varies from person to person, they can improve quality of life significantly. Hearing aids allow people to once again enjoy sounds they have been unable to hear for a long time. Hearing aid users can also find conversations in social environments a lot less exhausting.

• If you have hearing loss, your brain can become unaccustomed to receiving sound input. The longer that this state persists, the harder it will become to get used to hearing again, and the less effective hearing aids may be in the end.

Your hearing is precious. It's easy to forget how much we rely on our hearing, so do not delay, make your appointment today for a hearing test.

Your Hearing Specialists

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Four Shires October 2013.indd 64 23/09/2013 13:41:14

STRUTT PARKER OPEN NEW OFFICE IN SUMMERTOWN, OXFORD

Strutt and Parker have recently opened a stylish modern office, located on the Banbury Road to the north of the city. A multi-disciplined office deals with matters as diverse as the sale of an Oxford town house to the re-organisation of a rural estate or the planning and development of a new settlement.

Pictures by *Four Shires'* Jeremy Wilton

Pictures show: 1: Mark Jumper and Mark Smith (Manager) 2: Mike Robinson, Gerald king, Ismay King and Iain Davis 3: Sally Marshall and Kevin Byrne 4: Dan Cowley, Richard Kennedy and Tom Richardson 5: Charlotte Pile, Russell Harrison and Sue Trafford 6: Mark Dickin and Sarah Duffy 7: Debbie Searle 8: Charlotte Pile and Miles Collison 9: Richard White, Alan Sinclair and Mark McAndrew 10: Edward Williams, Ann Tutt and Kiersty Long 11: Andrew Miscampbell and Rachel Brodie 12: George Densham, Andrew Chalk and Henry Gurney 13: David Inch and Mark Wiggin

Four Shires October 2013.indd 65 23/09/2013 13:42:22

MORE PEOPLE HAVING TO PAY HIGHER RATE TAX

Since 6 April 2013 some additional 400,000 individuals now fall within the 40% tax bracket due to the reduction in the threshold for the higher rate from £42,475 to £41,450.

A record one in six taxpayers is now subject to the 40% higher rate as opposed to only one in twenty when Conservative chancellor Nigel Lawson introduced the 40% band twenty five years ago.

This takes the total paying 40% tax to in excess of four million which is predicted by The Institute for Fiscal Studies to rise as high as five million during the next three years. With the burden of national insurance on top more families struggling after the recession will pay a punishing rate of tax previously seen as the preserve of the wealthy.

Apart from dividends and a couple of other exceptions, the tax legislation generally treats savings income as the top slice of taxable income. In turn this creates a further 20% liability to income tax on savings income which has already been subject to a basic rate tax deduction at source.

Dividends are charged at the ordinary rate of 10% for basic rate taxpayers, the upper rate of 32.5% for 40% taxpayers and at the additional rate of 37.5% for those with other income greater than £150,000 per annum. There is of course a notional 10% tax credit deducted from those amounts relieving basic rate taxpayers from any further tax liabilities in respect of dividend income however higher rate taxpayers are required to pay any balance due.

Whilst George Osborne has extended the personal allowance, removing those on lowest incomes from the tax net altogether, lowering the tax bands has pushed more people into higher rates of tax. At the same time more than 250,000 individuals paying the 50% top rate of tax in 2012/2013 will now enjoy a 5% fall in their liabilities as the top rate has dropped to 45%.

If you require any further details in respect of these changes please contact Morag Matthews at Ellacotts on 01295 250401 or e-mail mmatthews@ellacotts.co.uk

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Four Shires October 2013.indd 66 16/09/2013 14:30:18

A fresh eye over your assets

Fisher German have a long established history of rural estate management, in fact, it's what the company has been built around.

UK wide from fifteen offices we manage or consult on three hundred rural estates, totalling over 400,000 acres. These can be single blocks of agricultural land let under agricultural tenancy through to multi discipline several thousand acre properties.

There can be many reasons for instructing an external agent to either manage a rural estate or provide advice to the existing day to day manager but the principle drivers are usually;

- asset performance;
- planning and promotion;
- wealth management;
- next generation succession; and increasingly both
- environmental stewardship; and
- the burden of red tape

We can offer advice on all such matters to land and property owners. We also search for estates both on and off market that meet our client's requirements and provide a buying service.

On first instruction we bring a fresh pair of eyes to a property portfolio, gauging whether the right structure is in place and whether the existing occupiers are providing market rents and yields. Are the correct tenancies in place, for example is the landowner granting much longer terms of occupation to that originally intended through lack of management action? Where the ownership structure is inefficient, we make recommendations for improvements, often working in conjunction with the existing professional team of accountant and lawyer.

Jonathan Perks

Our success in managing estates is backed up not just by our initial moves to improve performance but by continually bringing new and innovative ideas to the estate in order to improve performance and viability. We keep our clients abreast of the latest requirements and take away much of the uncertainty and burden that increasing red tape can bring. For example we are keeping a close eye on the likely requirements for property owners of the Energy Act 2011 and subsequent regulations which will see let residential property having to meet high EPC standards from 2018 at the latest. Our expert planning and development team provide advice both on individual planning applications and on strategic considerations such as option or promotion agreements in order to bring larger blocks of land forward for development.

Instructions will often include the requirement to provide valuations for many and varied reasons, such as inheritance, capital gains and asset transfer. The properties themselves can be many and varied, with our valuation team having valued public houses, canal moorings and a scrap yard in the last twelve months as well as the more usual farms, houses and land.

Recent instructions to the Banbury office have seen us take on the management of;

- A 2,000 acre mixed estate which comprises many different forms of property and occupation, from large farms on lifetime tenancies through to pony paddocks on short term agreements;
- A diverse portfolio of properties covering a wide geographic area on behalf of an educational institution; and
- A small family owned estate with long term development potential

If you would like to discuss how Fisher German can assist in managing your estate then we'd be delighted to talk you through the options available.

your local team

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- property agency
- planning & construction
- renewable energy
- utilities & infrastructure
- HS2 advice

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Four Shires October 2013.indd 67 17/09/2013 11:51:20

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07/12/2013-08/12/2013

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FOUR SHIRES

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WARWICKSHIRE COMPANY HELPS ADDRESS UK ENGINEERING SHORTAGE

An engineering company based in Warwickshire is taking steps to address the national shortage of engineering graduates by running work placements and training programmes in Rugby.

Automotive Insulations develop and manufacture thermal and acoustic materials for the automotive, marine and commercial vehicle industries. The company is currently working with local students to provide hands-on experience of manufacturing with the aim of encouraging more graduates and school leavers to pursue a career in engineering.

One of the students is Shaun Morris, a chemistry undergraduate about to enter his third year of an engineering MSc at the University of Warwick.

Whilst on his eight week placement, Shaun is helping to develop a new polyurethane foam product that will be manufactured in a newly opened unit at AI.

AI's MD Jim Griffin believes that British industry needs to take a more proactive step to encourage new talent into manufacturing and engineering. "It is important for the future of British manufacturing that we invest in the future. We need the best and the brightest students to come and work in this country to develop new products and work out the best way of producing them."

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Four Shires October 2013.indd 68 16/09/2013 14:29:32

DEATH - GETTING A GOOD DEAL

Gloomy stories report that the costs associated with passing on are spiralling upward! Funeral costs, headstones, flowers, notices, probate etc, amounts to an average of £7,622 we are told, an increase of 7.1% on 2012!

In Banbury and the surrounding area we are lucky to have some funeral directors that offer good value for money and who provide a professional and sensitive service. As a solicitor acting for bereaved families, I would say that in my experience the entire cost of a funeral including death notices, burial and cremation fees, averages between £2,000 and £3,500.

What Else Will Need To Be Done?

When someone dies, apart from registering the death and organising the funeral, the next step is usually to find a solicitor to assess the size of the estate, advise upon the Will (if there is one) and to establish whether or not a grant of probate is needed to access the deceased's assets. A grant of probate is simply a document that provides the executor or administrator of the estate with the authority to deal with the deceased's assets.

What Will It Cost?

The costs of dealing with the administration of an estate of a deceased person vary. I recently read that typically, solicitors charge 3.5% of an estate plus VAT to obtain probate. What nonsense! Usually solicitors work on a time basis or charge a fixed fee.

Qualifications?

Make sure that the person dealing with you is legally experienced. Some aspects can be complicated especially where there is no Will or if there are assets in joint ownership or abroad or if there is inheritance tax to pay.

A further point to be aware of is that some organisations are not regulated to do probate work and therefore sell your work on to a practice that is, so that without knowing it you end up instructing someone entirely different.

Plan Ahead

One other bit of advice – write a Will now rather than assuming that your assets will automatically pass to your partner or closest family. Dying without a Will makes things harder for your surviving family and the added complications cause unnecessary costs.

Lucy Gordon is a Private Client Partner at Spratt Endicott Solicitors and has over 20 years experience in Wills & Probate, Personal Tax, Trusts, Lasting Power of Attorney and other private client matters. More recently she has become a full member of Solicitors for the Elderly. If you would like to speak to Lucy, her direct line is 01295 204045 or email her at lgordon@se-law.co.uk

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Four Shires October 2013.indd 69 23/09/2013 13:43:52

THE BUSINESS OWNER
Alison Kenward

THE BUSINESS
Solitaire Group

EMAIL
alison.kenward@btinternet.com

CONTACT
07808714370

When did the business start?

I have been training horses and riders since I gained my teaching qualification in 1994. My interest in PR grew from working with riding club committees and sponsors.

In 2010 I expanded my role with my then sponsor *Equetech* and took on the role of PR & Marketing Consultant for the company.

Where is it based?

I work throughout the *Four Shires* region, though my horses are based at home where I also have an office. I have worked in New Zealand too as well as competing there and in Australia, America and South Africa. When I first started work I was based in Northamptonshire before growing my client base in the surrounding counties and beyond.

What is the secret to building a good business?

Working with horses you recognise that every horse is an individual and you have to make a partnership. Businesses are similar, you need to listen to each client and work with them to understand what makes them unique. I think networking in real time or within the social media landscape is key.

What are the particular challenges facing the business at this time?

Mobile networks have boosted my business pathways however rural signals are variable and I don't have great broadband at home which I miss!

Have you made many mistakes as you have built up the business?

I approach business with the same model I use in sport - think about the next job so you are always thinking forwards, this helps maintain my focus and productivity. In other words perfection is not possible, mistakes happen, so deal with them and move on.

Do you have a fondness for working within the *Four Shires?*

The *Four Shires* are my home and some invisible tie reminds me this is where I belong! Nothing compares to this region and everything we need is here though I do also love to travel and explore from time to time.

Did you always want to work within your chosen profession? If not what would you do?

I have always wanted to be with and around horses - only reading and writing came close, so perhaps an alternative career might have been media based too?

What lessons have you learnt in your career?

I have learnt not to be afraid of asking for help. I have been fortunate to work and train with talented and generous coaches and most recently I have met with the Oxfordshire Business Enterprise Team, who offer great support and guidance.

Could you describe a working day?

I'm not an early morning person unless its a competition day, however, the horses will need to be given breakfast and settled for the day ahead. So the day starts before 8am. Next it's time to check in online and I generally have breakfast with my iPad balanced precariously on the other side of my chair to my teacup.. Press releases, product reviews and social media monitoring (surfing!) are squeezed into my morning alongside writing copy and talking to clients. I prefer to ride in the middle of the day before heading out to coach or meet with clients though the great thing about my business is how flexible I can be so as long as the horses are cared for at each end of the day everything else adapts to enable me to meet deadlines and fit in competitions.

How do you spend your spare time?

I love to read and I support Northampton Saints RFC and England Rugby though in our house there is usually sport or the Universal Channel on the television in the background.

What books are you reading and what is your favourite book?

I have just finished *A Weekend with Mr Darcy* perfect escapism. Favourite book however, is a tough call. I fell in love with *Jane Eyre* when I was about seven and that's hard to beat. Toby Stephens is my perfect Rochester so far!

Favourite film and music?

Film favourite is even harder to choose, growing up with *International Velvet* and *Dirty Dancing* I have to have a happy ending. I watched *Sweet Home Alabama* recently and that never gets old!

Music is easier. I love *Sting, Crowded House* and *Jack Johnson.*

Is there someone in business you would like to emulate?

One day I hope to be able to ride like Emile Faurie and Mark Todd.

What are your hopes for the future of the business?

I am looking forward to next season as I am coaching a great team of horses and riders and have high hopes of us competing at the National Championships.

On the PR side I am representing some exciting brands and riders and we are all turning our thoughts to Rio in 2016.

Four Shires October 2013.indd 70 24/09/2013 08:44:44

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BRACKLEY BIKE FESTIVAL BOOMS AGAIN

Under thankfully sunny skies once again, the town centre of Brackley was given over to hundreds of gleaming motorcycles in mid-August for the annual Bike Festival that raises funds for the Northamptonshire Air Ambulance and various other local and motorcycle-related charities.

The Festival is genuinely a unique event on the bikers' calendar, for nowhere else on the UK mainland is a town's main street and its adjoining roads closed off and turned into a racetrack for the day. A track where racing motorcycles are displayed in action and at speed, with their un-silenced exhaust notes booming off the walls of the Town Hall and the other High Street buildings.

And it's not just racing motorcycles that are on display. The track also sees spectacular stunt riders in action while there are incredible custom bikes gleaming in the sun and, over on the Magdalen College School playing field, static displays of classic motocross racers as well as trials riders doing the near impossible on their lightweight competition bikes. They are the balance artists of the two-wheeled world.

The Festival is fast becoming one of the most popular events on the motorcycle calendar – and deservedly so. If you enjoy motorcycles of any description, then note the third Sunday of August in your diary for next year.

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Pictures by Roger Cooper

Four Shires October 2013.indd 73 16/09/2013 14:07:55

Following our hot summer, one would expect to see more people taking in activities on the water. Here we can see sailing craft assembled at Grimsbury reservoir in the late 60s

If you can shed more light on any of the pictures featured in our *'Pictures from the Past section'* we would love to hear from you.

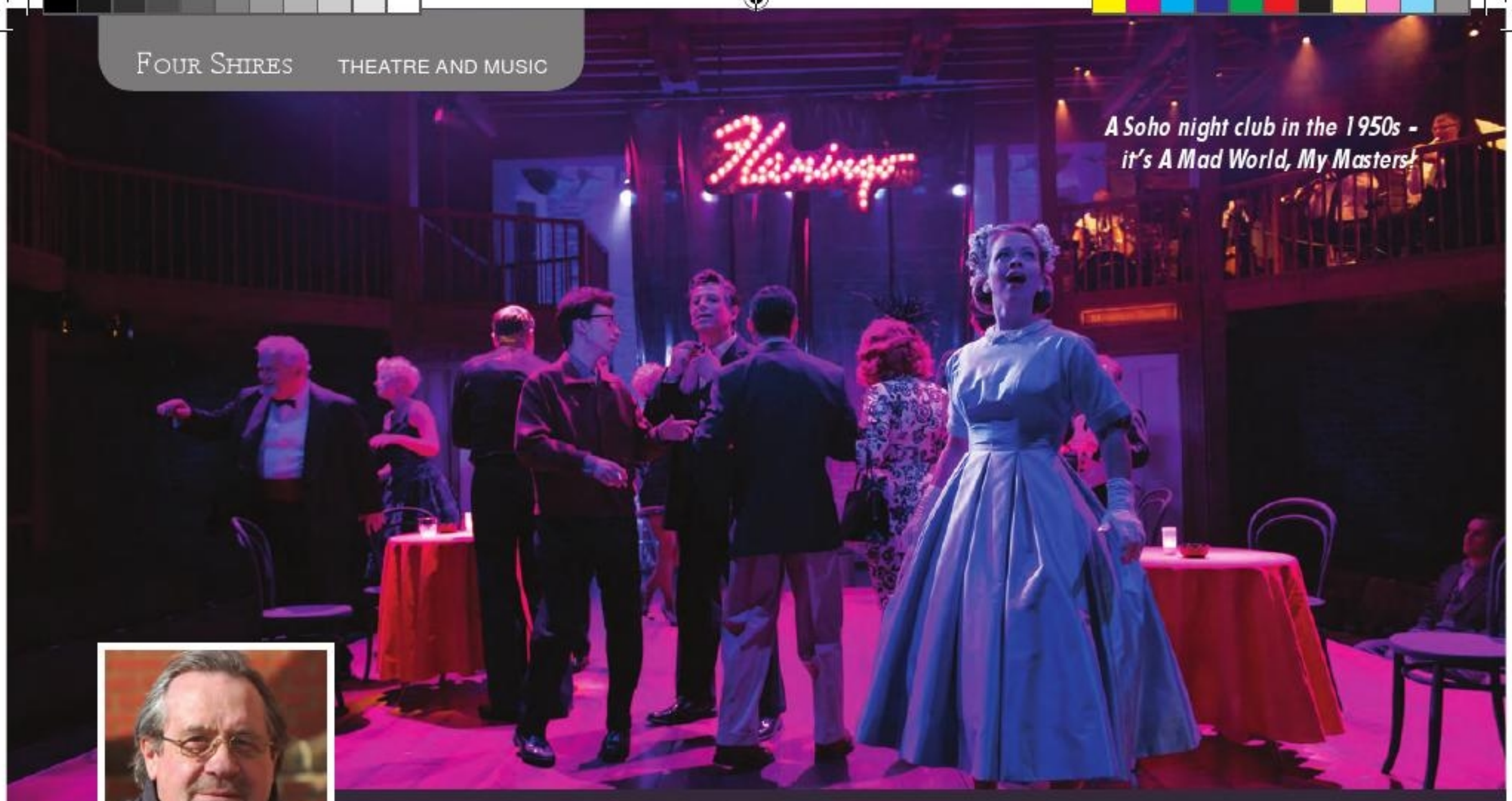
Email cathy@fourshires.co.uk, phone 01295 273138 or you can use the postal address in the front of the magazine.

Four Shires October 2013.indd 74 23/09/2013 13:46:55

FROM THE ARCHIVES

These pictures taken in the late 60s show a Remembrance Day parade taking place in Banbury. We like the pictures as they show parts of Banbury from bygone age. In the background one can make out the County Garages at the cross. In the other picture it seems that a march is going the 'wrong' way up Marlborough Road in Banbury. Of course, back then Marlborough Road was a two way street...

Four Shires October 2013.indd 75 18/09/2013 10:33:43



A Soho night club in the 1950s - it's A Mad World, My Masters!

Bruce Cox

PRAISE FOR THE SWAN THEATRE

Feature by Bruce Cox, Photographs by Manuel Harlan - Royal Shakespeare Company

With so much of the whole of the town's economy based on the performing and merchandising of the works of Shakespeare, one might think that Stratford upon Avon has nothing else to offer theatregoers. But that surmise couldn't be further from the actuality...thanks to the existence of the Royal Shakespeare's 'other theatre' – the Swan.

The Swan is built on to the side of the larger Royal Shakespeare Theatre, and occupies the Victorian Gothic structure which formerly housed the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. This actually preceded the RST but was almost totally destroyed by a fire in 1926.

Originally opened in 1986, the Swan was totally refurbished and integrated into the main theatre complex as part of the Royal Shakespeare Company's £112.8 million transformation project that was completed in 2010. That, of course, saw Elizabeth Scott's 1932 RST traditional 'proscenium arch' auditorium transformed into a new 1000-seater with a deep thrust stage right into the heart of the audience and surrounded by tiers of viewing galleries reminiscent of the 'in the round' theatres of Shakespeare's time.

Designed by Michael Reardon, the Swan holds around 450 people and is essentially a half-sized, more intimate version of the new RST. Although, having said that and knowing that the smaller theatre was completed 25 years before the main auditorium transformation, perhaps we should say that the RST is a larger, less intimate version of the Swan!

When it opened under the auspices of joint Artistic Directors Trevor Nunn and Terry Hands the Swan was to be dedicated to playing the works of William Shakespeare's contemporaries along with the occasional work by the man himself. Subsequently there have been many other types of drama performed there including works by Chekhov, Ibsen and Tennessee Williams.

Indeed, as well as a still memorable production of Harold Pinter's *The Homecoming* back in 2011 I have seen many diverse and diverting non-Shakespeare plays at the Swan from a wide span of the centuries. Earlier this year, for example, the RST's new Artistic Director, Gregory Doran brought back to life a 500 year-old telling of the story of *The Orphan of Zhao*, itself a 2,500 year old Chinese political drama. Then we had political drama Russian-style via Alexander Pushkin's Boris Godunov and finally saw the spring season draw to a splendid close with a wonderful performance by Ian McDiarmid in the title role of Bertolt Brecht's *A Life of Galileo*.

A MAD WORLD MY MASTERS

Now running – and you just have (and must make) time to see it before it closes on October 25th – is one of the most hilarious plays I have seen in quite some time. Sean Foley made his RSC directorial debut with his take on *A Mad World My Master* and what a debut he made! Thomas Middleton's outrageous 'city comedy' was translated from 15th century Jacobean London to the Soho of the 1950s and remained a brilliantly plotted, farcical satire of lies and lust. Middleton's use of the language is such that the play would still be funny whatever era it happens to be set in but, having said that, fulsome credit must be given to the dialogue editors, Phil Porter and Foley himself for updating Middleton's words in such a way as to make them totally relevant to the 20th century while still retaining most of their earthy Jacobean flavour.

The story revolves around a dashingly impecunious bachelor, Dick Follywit, who is always in need of quick cash and a good time – not always in that order! He knows that he will inherit

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Happy hooker Truly Kidman (Sarah Ridgeway) with her mother and pimp! (Ishia Bennison)

his rich uncle's fortune but until then has to live on his wits. So he turns conman to fool his rich uncle into parting with some of the 'readies' ahead of time and variously impersonates a Lord and a high class call girl! Meanwhile, Truly Kidman – who is a high-class call girl – is poor but quick witted. She needs to fool and then marry a rich young man. ...

Sean Foley and Phil Porter's edited version of Middleton's play is faithful to the original text but adapts it to fit the seedy world of 1950s Soho, updating character names and including songs of the time to enhance the feeling of being deep in the louche life of 'Bohemian' London in the 'fifties.

This was the first time that this play had been performed at the RSC and the company has only ever staged four Middleton plays. If this one is anything to go by they should be planning more in future, with the choice of Foley and Porter as Director and Editor as a given.

Sean Foley would, I am sure, be up for it as he said of this production; "After working on *A Mad World My Masters* for two weeks in the RSC Studio, we came to one simple conclusion: this is one of the most hilariously wicked plays ever written.

"If new, it might be hailed as the bastard offspring of Richard Sheridan and Joe Orton, but one whose mid-wife was a naughty nurse from a 1970s sex comedy. Outrageous and sweetly daft, modern but timeless, it mixes profound wit and slapstick, poetics and on-the-nose jokes in a unique way - yet still manages to keep us interested in its marvellous parade of characters striving to find their way to love and fortune in a recognisably fast paced London.

"I wanted to make sure that nothing got in the way of communicating *Mad World's* seething delight in playfully exposing how we pretend to be what we're not in order to get what we want. I wanted it to have music - which we know that the original had - because the whole play is a sort of brilliantly vibrant celebration of entertainment - it knows it's being funny, and invites us to have fun in knowing that it knows.

"And I wanted to try to make sure everyone could laugh like they must have done in 1605: uproariously, and at ourselves. So we decided to cut away innuendoes, references and allusions to things no one has heard of any more; to change names when Middleton's joke could be rendered more clearly with modern language; and to 'translate' from Jacobean English in to our own contemporary idioms for those few passages where we judged that Middleton's intentions and humour would be too buried in 500 year old inaccessible language.

"London is timeless, and 1950s Soho seemed to offer a stylish and recognisable stand-in for London 1605: a post-war world, where everyone was worried about sliding morals, the position of women, a changing class system, immigrants, and not to mention where on earth to get the next drink! But it was also a time when politicians were telling people "you've never had it so good" and when foreign food and fashions began loosening straight-laced Britain, despite the high-minded protestations of some".

Lead actors returning to the RSC for this production were Richard Goulding as Dick Follywit and Sarah Ridgeway, in the role of Truly Kidman. Richard last appeared at the RSC with

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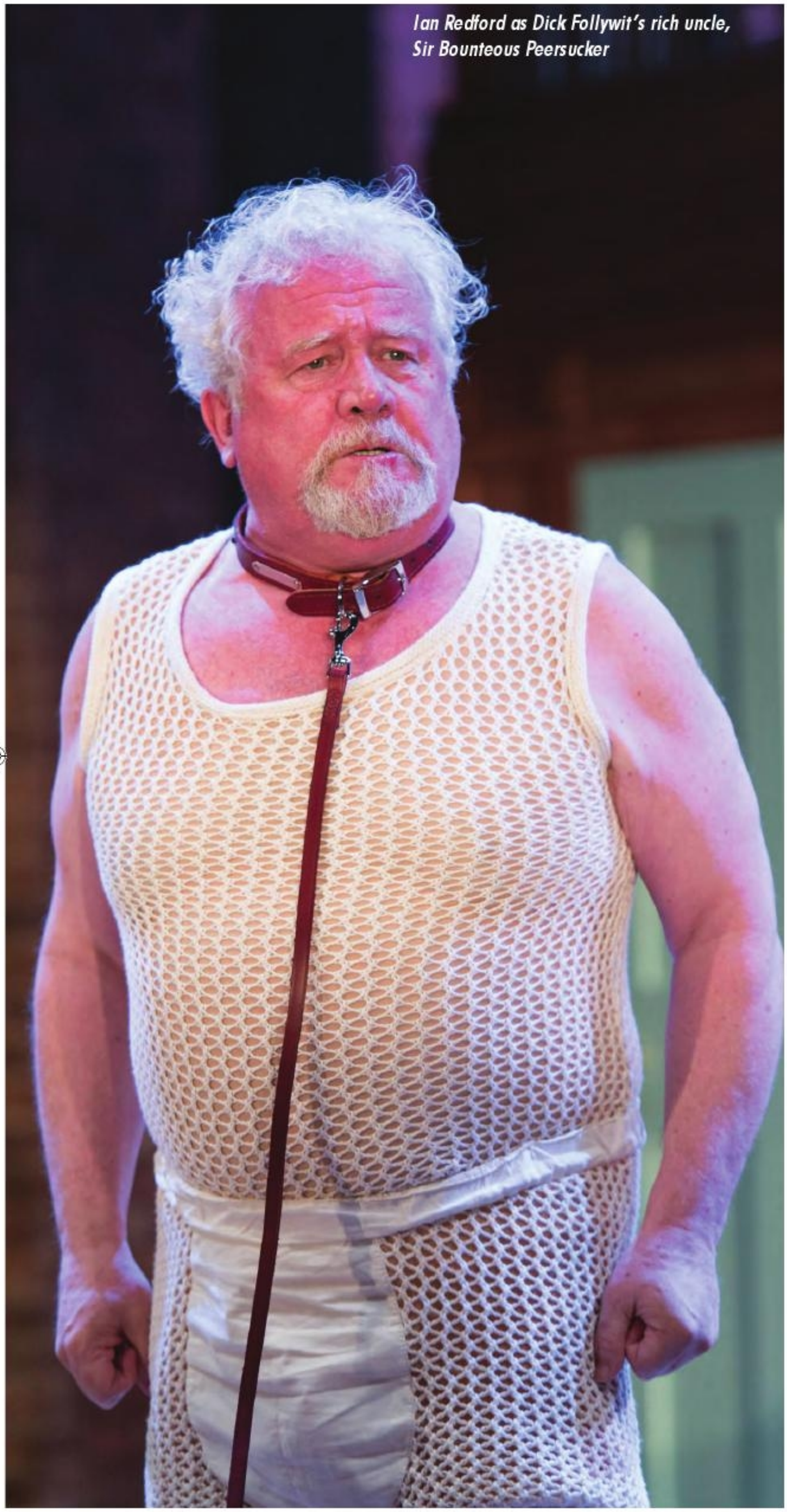

Ian Redford as Dick Follywit's rich uncle, Sir Bounteous Peersucker

Ian McKellen in the 2007 double bill of Trevor Nunn's *King Lear* and *The Seagull* which toured internationally after its premiere at the RSC's Courtyard Theatre. Sarah last performed in Roy Williams' Iraq War play *Days of Significance*. She and Richard were joined by John Hopkins as Penitent Brothel (yes, that really is his character's name!...Ed). John, of course is well known from the period of his regular role of Sgt Scott opposite John Nettles in the ITV series *Midsomer Murders*, and recently appeared in the current Stephen Poliakoff series, *Dancing on the Edge*.

A Mad World My Masters continues at the Swan until October 25th, in repertory with Candide, which runs until November 26th. Also running from November 7th until November 30th is the first offering in the Swan's winter season. This sees the RSC joining forces with The Public Theatre, New York and Gablestage of Miami in presenting Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Finally, very much a production to make note of is Gregory Doran's staging of *Richard II* with David Tennant in the title role. It runs in the main RoyalShakespeare Theatre from October 10th to November 16th.

For tickets and more information, call the Box Office on 0844 800 1114 or go online at www.rsc.org.uk

WELSH NATIONAL OPERA AND THE TUDORS

The Welsh National Opera is a regular visitor to our region, performing at the New Theatre, Oxford, the Milton Keynes Theatre and Birmingham Hippodrome. During October and November WNO will be at Oxford and Birmingham, with three operas based on the reign of two of the best-known of Britain's Tudor rulers - *Henry VIII* and *Elizabeth 1*.

It is a dramatic subject made very popular by a recent television series and from these operas you will be able to see how Italian composer, Gaetano Donizetti, regarded those turbulent times. His operatic trilogy focusses on the tragedies of three people who were doomed to fall out of the favour of those capricious and all-powerful monarchs. The tragic trio were Anne Boleyn, Mary Queen of Scots and Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex.

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John Hopkins and Sarah Ridgeway

At Oxford, WNO performs *Anna Bolena* on October 16th, *Maria Stuarda* on October 17th and *Roberto Devereux* on October 18th. These three are preceded by Puccini's Tosca on October 15th.

At the Birmingham Hippodrome, the company performs *Tosca* on Nov 12th and 16th, *Anna Bolena* on Nov 13th, *Maria Stuarda* on Nov 14th and *Roberto Devereux* on Nov 15th.

Coincidental with the Tudor Trilogy tour, WNO and the National Trust are working together to give audiences a better insight into that period of history via special events held at National Trust houses in the areas of some of the theatre venues.

Historical experts will be joined by singers in full Tudor costume to explore what really happened as distinct from Donizetti's imagining of historical events. Novelist Suzannah Dunn will be joined by historian Anna Whitelock to present *Fact and Fiction* and explore Donizetti's historic 'poetic licence' – Mary Stuart never actually met her cousin Elizabeth, for example, and Elizabeth certainly did not abdicate for her love of the Earl of Essex!

Anna was one of the contributing historians on BBC Radio 4's landmark series *The Art of Monarchy* and she both wrote and presented *Heritage Wars* on BBC Radio 3. Suzannah's book *The Confession of Katherine Howard* was a best seller in 2011. Their presentation of *Fact and Fiction* will be held at Packwood House, Lapworth, near Solihull on November 14th.

For more details and ticket prices of all these performances and special events, as well as information on free pre-performance talks before all of The Tudors operas and a free 'new to opera' talk before Tosca on go online at www.wno.org.uk

A SPECIAL OFFER FOR THE UNDER 30s

Finally, knowing that opera audiences are generally more mature in years, the WNO is keen for more young people to be moved by the power of classical music and believes that actually seeing an opera and experiencing the visual splendour along with the powerful music will make believers of them. Therefore, the company has introduced an Under 30's ticket scheme which offers hugely discounted tickets to main house operas and concerts across its touring venues. There are 50 tickets available at every performance for just £5 each. The offer runs throughout WNO's 2013-14 season and the only proviso to qualify for the £5 offer is that you must be under 30. Seats are located within first three price bands. ID is required for each ticket purchased and the offer is, of course, subject to availability.

Richard Goulding (Dick Follywit) is supported in his schemes by his friends Ben Deery (Sponger) and Harry McEntire (Oboe)

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Jazz notes

WITH MICK DAY

Pictured: Marion Turner

In the couple of decades following the second world war a number of British jazz pianists emigrated to the USA; best remembered is George Shearing, who became an international star. There were also Dill Jones and Eddie Thompson, but leading the way was a young woman, born in Slough and initially performing in music hall. Marion Turner met and married American trumpeter Jimmy McPartland and returned to his home country in 1945. Within a few years Marion McPartland was an important part of the American jazz scene as a performer, writer, composer and broadcaster. Her radio programme *Piano Jazz* won awards and her educational work, particularly with the black community, was outstanding. During one of her visits to New Orleans to perform with her trio in a local school the stage was shared with a band led by the 15 year old Wynton Marsalis and his brother Branford. Even then it was clear that the trumpeter was an exceptional musician with enormous ambition. Marion stated " I was flabbergasted…it was unbelievable." She appeared with and met many of the top musicians in the States and yet never really became an internationally known musician. Marion died in August at the age of 95.

Pride of place in the gig listings this month must go to **The Walnut Tree** in Blisworth, where Sunday lunchtime sessions have been taking place for the past 30 years. To celebrate, organiser Tad Newton is laying on a special programme on 20th; commencing at midday and continuing throughout the day. Top attraction will be one of this country's leading saxophonists Alan Barnes. Also lined up are the Savannah Jazz Band, Ben Holder and the Hot Club Of Cambridge, the Mike Kemp Trio and Tad Newton's Jazz Friends. Full details are available on **01604 858549**. The other October Sunday gigs at this venue are Frog Island Jazz band (6th), Bill Bailey All Stars (13th) and Mike Owen's Danish All Stars (27th).

Staying in Northants, **the Wig and Pen**, St Giles Street, Northampton **(01536 513973)** continues to present an evening jazz slot each week. The Dave Johnson Band appears there on 1st, followed on 8th by All That Jazz, Chris Parker Jazz Quartet (15th), singer Sheila Waterfield with the Graham Dent Band (22nd) and the Roy Hawkesford Band (29th).

The swinging sounds of a big band can be enjoyed at the **Derngate Theatre, Northampton (01604 624811)** on Sunday 3rd November when the Glenn Miller Orchestra under the direction of Ray McVay appear on stage playing some of the favourite numbers associated with the original band.

Leam-Jazz (07919 210510) meets monthly at Leamington Rugby Club. Trumpeter Ian Chalk makes a trip from the north to appear there on 16th with the BoHop Trio.

The iconic music of the late 1950s and early 1960s found on the Blue Note record label - many of the albums made then still sell well - form the basis of the programme to be played by trombonist Geoff Mason's Quintet at **Carswell Country Club**, near Faringdon on 25th during the monthly meeting of Live Jazz In Oxfordshire **(01367 718903)**.

Born in Australia but now resident in Shropshire, Casey Greene brings his Latin Five to **Stratford Jazz Club (01789 264787)** on 9th. The Club meets in The Chapel, 1 Shakespeare Street, and on 23rd Tom Hill's Funkin' Jazzy Blues Dudes will be performing there.

Amongst the extensive evening music programme at **The Stables, Wavendon, Milton Keynes, (01908 280800)** is a tribute to clarinettist Terry Lightfoot, who died earlier this year (October 6th), the all Italian Marco Marconi Trio (8th), and Jacqui Dankworth (18th). The lunchtime Live Jazz Matters session on 27th features vibes player Roger Beaujolais and his Trio.

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